

# THE MINISTER AS A KING-MAKER

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ISHWARA TOPA

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K I T A B I S T A N

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अवधविहारी मारुत







THE MINISTER  
AS A KING-MAKER



*By the author*

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL  
THOUGHT IN INDIA (Friederichsen, de  
Gruyter & Co., Hamburg, 1930)

SIDELIGHTS ON THE PROBLEM OF INDIAN  
NATIONALITY (Kitabistan, Allahabad, 1933)

POLITICS IN PRE-MUGHAL TIMES (Kitabis-  
tan, Allahabad, 1938)

OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE (Kitabistan,  
Allahabad, 1940)



# THE MINISTER AS A KING-MAKER

A study in Kauṭilya's views and  
ways on the basis of his Arthaśāstra

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WITH A FOREWORD

*by*

**The Rt. Hon'ble**

**SIR AKBAR HYDARI, P. C.**

**KITABISTAN**



FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1941

# I Anthasashtra

- (i) Concept of Anthasashtra
- (ii) Toynbee's Theory of Challenge & Kautsky's
- (iii) Organisation of man & of Arya & Dasa (a) Organisation of man through education



## FOREWORD

My young friend, Dr. Ishwara Topa, has rendered service to the literature on political philosophy by contributing to it this little volume on the theories of Kauṭilya. I have read it with deep interest and find that Dr. Topa has every reason to congratulate himself on the task of synthesizing in an excellent manner the basic concepts and principles of the Arthaśāstra into a system of political thought.

We may not agree with all the political maxims of Kauṭilya, but none can deny the robustness and vigour which characterizes his outlook. Life for him is a reality, a positivism, an enrichment; to him victory comes through struggle and activity; the aim of life is not submission but the conquest of life-forces. Fatalism is to him a negative philo-

freedom



sophy, and he advocates 'culturalization' of man through education and the sciences. Even his all-pervading idea of kingship is a dynamic principle, a principle of eternal activism, and in the discharge of its duties towards the State and the people, Kautilya's kingship attains self-realization.

In reading this book I am reminded of much similar thought produced much later by other thinkers, both in the East and in the West, who were doubtless unaware of Kautilya. An obvious comparison is provided by Machiavelli; another is the great Tusi of Central Asia. If I may offer a suggestion, Dr. Topa would do well to expand the next edition in such a way as to provide for annotations giving the results of such comparative study which, I feel sure, will be of much value not only to the student of political theories but even to the general reader.

A. HYDARI



## PREFACE

Vishnugupta Kauṭilya—the minister of Chandragupta Maurya—wrote the Arthaśâstra with the purpose of expounding the science of politics for kings. The Arthaśâstra is a condensed manual of politics, simplified and made easy, in order to serve kings as the surest guide on their way to conquest and domination. To conquer the world and govern it is the objective of Kauṭilya. The king-conqueror should make this goal his own. His task is arduous, nerve-racking, life-risking, and full of temptations and pitfalls. To achieve such a political aim is a matter of no trivial importance. The king-conqueror—the ideal of Kauṭilya—is not a freak of nature, nor an outcome of political distemper, nor a political ‘Frankenstein’. He is a natural socio-

objective



political phenomenon. In the Kauṭilyian scheme of politics he is the cardinal principle. His real and positive existence is a *sine qua non* for the growth and fulfilment of the political life of the state. And he also is an indispensable factor in bringing about realism in the world of politics. Though Kauṭilya assigns the king the highest status, yet he is the creature of sociological factors that influence him in the making of his personality. As a conqueror he is not born as a finished and chiselled product, but the socializing forces of education, discipline, and culture transform his crudeness and angularity into refinement and humaneness, and determine his character.

In the Dharmasāstric literature of ancient India kingship and politics are not discussed from the Arthasāstric standpoint. Though great importance is attached to these political factors, the ideology of the Brahmanic Smṛiti authors is different. As their source is Dharmic, the principles and practice of politics and king-

Kingship

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Concepts  
of  
ancient  
times  
compared  
&  
contrasted



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ship are aligned to suit their Dharmasastric ideal. The idea of a 'political' state is foreign to them. Kingship serves their purpose and for the achievement of their Dharmasastric aim it is instituted. But the whole philosophy of the Arthasâstra is political. It expounds primarily the art of politics as such; forms into a science by itself; is independent, and has grown out of its laws in contradiction to the laws of Dharma. Though there are stray references to the Arthasâstric tendencies in the religio-sociological literature of the ancient people of India, the real importance of the Arthasâstra was realized in 1905 when Dr. Shamasastri discovered the old manuscript of the Arthasâstra of Kautilya of the Mauryian fame. The discovery of Kautilya's Arthasâstra not only created a great sensation in the world of the indologists, but also gave rise to much discussion and hair-splitting as to the various aspects of political phraseology as well as ideology of the political writers of

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VII. 14



ancient India. They also discussed fanatically the authorship of the newly discovered Arthaśāstra from every conceivable viewpoint. Some discredited the author; others extolled him. The points of view represented by the indologists are (a) that Kauṭilya is not the author of the Arthaśāstra; it belongs to a particular school of political thought; (b) that the Arthaśāstra is the work of Kauṭilya who himself wrote it for the guidance of kings. The latter school of thought is holding ground and gaining importance from day to day. Winternitz in his History of Indian Literature remarks that the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya is "a unique work which throws more light on the cultural affairs and the real life in ancient India than any other work in Indian literature." It is also considered as "the most valuable work in the whole field of Indian literature." Such importance, given to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra, is not due to the volume of light, but much more to the new light that it throws



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on a India—worldly, realistic, and materialistic. The Arthaśâstra does not give us the abstract philosophy of materialism, but of this earthy life, full of flesh and blood. The realistic world is the Arthaśâstra. The whole science of politics and of life, finds its origin in a Arthaśâstric sentence: "Only the earthly benefit counts; all is good that promotes benefit; all is bad that destroys it." This utilitarian idea also was known to the ancient thinkers but its application in the world of politics gives it a newer import and significance in the Arthaśâstric sense.

The fundamental idea in the Arthaśâstra of Kautilya is the idea of 'vijigishu' (the conqueror of the world). Even in the political literature of ancient India the same idea is expressed, but "the world is not considered from the standpoint of the conqueror." Johann Jakob Meyer remarks that "in the Arthaśâstra of Kautilya the conqueror beams out from the circle of states." In



the words of Kautilya himself the same idea finds expression thus: "He (the conqueror) is the first state factor, his immediate neighbour the second, and the third separated by the country." Kautilya differentiated between the conqueror and the other kings (prakriti). Herein lies his original contribution to political thought. Kautilya gives the conqueror a pre-eminent position among kings.

As a practical statesman he visualizes the importance of the idea of the conqueror in the scheme of politics and in the life of the state. He was a keen student of the laws of politics and of the state and had studied nearly all the political literature of his country and reflected deeply on its problems. He rejected what seemed to him trivial and accepted what was valuable in it. His Arthaśāstra bears proof of his analytical capacity, of his sagacious nature, and of his critical aptitude. It seems that he analyzed and examined the Arthaśāstric material extant during his time.



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He did not take all as gospel truth but had worked out with a critical spirit an outline of the fundamentals of politics in the form of a compendium. He impressed his production with his own stamp. J. J. Meyer observes: "We have before us a compiler—but an extraordinary, unique one..... So Kauṭilya comes before us many times in the course of his work not as a Brihaspatian, or a Usanian, but as a Kauṭilyian (*selbaner*). The persistent iti Kauṭilyah is a dignified *ego ipsissimus*. He was not the creator of a new science, but a grandchild, an inheritance." It is a fact that Kauṭilya based his Arthaśâstra on the different political schools of thought as well as on political tradition and practices, but his greatness, as a political thinker, comes to the forefront when he weighs the pros and cons of the teachings of his old masters, infuses life into their 'woody' notions, contradicts their standpoints, and silences them for ever by his befitting and sound ways. Hence the Artha-



śâstra of Kauṭilya is not a verbatim copy of the old Arthaśâstras but a decided improvement on them. It is the soul of all the Arthaśâstras.

The author wishes to note that the present book is based on the Arthaśâstra of Kauṭilya, translated into English by Dr. R. Shamasastri, (Bangalore, 1915) and Das Altindische Buch vom Welt-und-Staatsleben (Das Arthaśâstra des Kauṭilya), translated into German by Johann Jakob Meyer, (Leipzig, 1926).

12 CHATHAM LINES

ALLAHABAD

June 6, 1941

I. TOPA



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to express his profound sense of gratitude to the Rt. Hon'ble Sir Akbar Hydari, Member for Information of the Viceroy's Executive Council, for the foreword; he is also grateful to Dr. Beni Prasad of the University of Allahabad for the introduction. His warmest thanks are due to Messrs. Ramnath Dar and P. N. Topa for their unflinching help in the correction of proofs.



## INTRODUCTION

Ancient India and Greece started with similar politics, but the geographical difference led to development along divergent lines. Greece evolved the city-state which tried many forms of government—monarchy, tyrannis, aristocracy, oligarchy, and democracy, as well as mixed forms. They evoked comparative study and a rich and varied political philosophy mainly during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. Particularly fruitful was the inquiry into the causes of transition from one form of government to another. It conduced to insight into the various phases of the political process and cognate factors.

Ancient India also knew of republics, aristocratic and democratic, but they were small in size and lasted only for a brief interval,



probably from the sixth to the fourth centuries B.C. The predominant form of government in Ancient India was the monarchy. In the domain of politics the stimuli of change and comparison was for the most part absent. Political thought centred round the nature and functions of the state, its constituent elements, the importance of the kingly office, its relation with the sacerdotal and other elements, the duties and functions of the king, of his ministers and subordinate officers and last, but not least, his relations with other sovereigns far and near. Political realism in Ancient India helped to develop schools of political thought and statecraft which are reflected in the Mahabharata, the Dharmasutras, the Dharma-sastras, the Puranas, and other important branches of Sanskrit as well as Pali literature. It seems that there were a large number of treatises of socio-political nature composed by thinkers like Viśālāksha, Uśanas, Brihaspati, Kauṇapadanta, Parāśara, Pisnu. That they

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Schools*



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represented different political schools of thought is indicative of the fact that much vigorous political thinking was done in Ancient India with a view to solving the political, social and economic problems of the times. References of their opinions in the works that have come down to us make the point too obvious. Unfortunately nearly all the original treatises have been lost, save one that was recovered in 1905 at Mysore by Pandit Shamasastri. This is the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭalya which deservedly ranks as the greatest work on the state in Ancient India. It has since been published in several editions. Two of them, *viz.*, the original edition and translation by Pandit Shamasastri and the later edition and translation by Johann Jakob Meyer, have been used by Dr. Ishwara Topa in this book.

Kauṭalya practically touched every aspect of the state. As his style is characterised by epigrammatic brevity and crispness, there



always remains room for further elucidation and interpretation. The weaving of the diverse Kauṭalyian ideas into a connected and systematic theme is the attraction of his work. The task to which Dr. Topa has addressed himself is the attempt at discussion on kingship and the state on the basis of the Kauṭalyian philosophy and ideology. As a keen student of Indian Culture and History, he has endeavoured to show how the politics of Kauṭalya is grounded in a philosophy of life. That philosophy is not one of pessimism or quietism. Kauṭalya believes in activism as well as energism. The directional activity is the spirit of the Kauṭalyian mind. The very exuberance of life calls for discipline, that is, harmony, education, adjustment, and culture. The idea of discipline may be said to be the sheet-anchor of the system of thought built up by Kauṭalya in the form of dissertations on various elements, aspects, and functions of the state. Discipline is the key-note of social life as well



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as of political life. It follows that the ruler must be a thoroughly educated person with a full understanding of his duties and a firm resolve to carry them out regardless of personal convenience or comfort. The state is thus founded on social and political service. It fails in its purpose and forgoes all claims to its realistic existence, if it goes off the track and ceases to subserve the public interest. It is the distinctive merit of Dr. Topa's work that he lays his finger at the deeper and essential elements in Kauṭalya's thought, weaves them together into an organic whole, psychological and sociological, and presents it in an attractive style. He is not content with a superficial analysis; he tries consistently to go to the root of the matter. Dr. Topa's book is a revelation of the genius of Kautalya.

The idealistic aspect, however, is not the only one that we find in the Arthaśâstra and other works on ancient Indian statecraft. These deal in real politics—the



politics of power, prestige, and imperialism—and seek to discover rules of guidance in the dealings of states with one another. Here the governing fact was that the geographical and cultural unity of India invited political unification, but the vast distances and the difficulties of transport and communication interposed serious difficulties. Indian history accordingly presents an interplay between the centripetal and centrifugal forces. The situation was accepted by political philosophers who envisaged a ruler as surrounded by a circle of potential enemies who in their turn were surrounded by enemies who might be expected to be friends of the sovereign postulated above and so on. This is the famous doctrine of Mandala which is usually expounded in a Machiavellian style by ancient Indian writers. Suzerainty and empire might be extended as opportunity offered and exigency counselled. Dr. Topa seeks to bring out this aspect as clearly as the first.



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*Inter alia*, Dr. Topa has scientifically brought out the importance of Kauṭalya's views and ways. He has steered clearly of details not because they are unimportant but because it is his purpose here that the trees should not obscure the wood. The whole discussion in the book is illuminating and thought-stimulating. His dissertation, stamped with an individuality, may be expected to fill a gap in the literature on Kauṭalya.

POLITICS DEPARTMENT  
UNIVERSITY OF ALLAHABAD

BENI PRASAD

May 6, 1941

• Hindu Soc organisation is based  
on intellectual-spiritual (Brahmanas),  
political and martial (Kaurya), economic  
(Vasya) and technical as well as  
manual service of the people (Sudras).  
Every member of the society was to  
serve ~~the~~ the land and God by the  
means of his service according  
to his own capacities & capabilities.







CHAPTER I  
FUNDAMENTALS







• Out of the spring of life sprouted the Kauṭilyian philosophy in the Arthaśâstra. The hereafter only interests and concerns Kauṭilya on the basis of life, not as a human problem. Life fascinates him with all its storm and stress and its ups and downs, because in it he visualizes the actual world in its expressions and activities. Life is a reality, a positivism, an enrichment to him. And he considers it invaluable and irreparable.<sup>1</sup> Death, the end of life, is the killer of all human incentive and work. It is a zero point of existence where life loses its meaning and purpose; it is a void—a state of nothingness and destruction.

Kauṭilya has no sense and appreciation of a thing that exists not. Only in the living he realizes himself and the world. The magic

<sup>1</sup> Shamasastri: The Arthaśâstra of Kauṭilya, p. 398; Johann Jakob Meyer: Das Arthaśâstra des Kauṭilya, p. 503.



touch of life awakens in him a deep sense of duty to the living. All that lives in human personality sanctifies activity and work. The all-creativity in human life attracts him as a passion. The incessant struggle of man is no vegetative existence but a law of life.<sup>2</sup> Through struggle only the victory to life comes. Not submission, but conquest of life-forces sets up the aim of life. It is this glorious aim that unfolds and enriches human potentialities.<sup>3</sup> So the purpose of life, according to Kautilya, is its unfoldment, enrichment, and fulfilment. Kautilya, having realized the importance of the law of life, does not recognize any other law superior to it for human welfare and progress.<sup>4</sup>

Life in this world is governed by human as well as non-human factors. These non-human (divine) factors are beyond the reach

<sup>2</sup> Shamasastri, p. 377; Meyer, p. 473.

<sup>3</sup> Meyer, p. LXVII.

<sup>4</sup> Meyer, p. LXVII.



and control of human beings. Fortune and misfortune, benediction and calamity as acts of the Divine or Nature are non-human factors and their laws are fixed and immutable. They work mechanically and unhumanly. Kautilya views the attitude towards life, determined by the supra-mundane agencies, as restricted to the play of the forces of Nature, not to the domain of human activity and work. These do not butt in or intervene in works conducted by man; for his actions they do not count.

Man is free from their shackles and has a free-will and initiative of his own and he has to use them for his own making and unmaking, and has to exploit them for the furtherance of his ends. That the negative philosophy of life stunts and paralyzes man is inconceivable to Kautilya. The fatalistic man has no existence or place in the Kautilyian scheme of things. His inborn hatred for those who believe, all in all, in the working of fate for human destiny is evident in his Arthaśāstra.



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He at once repudiates the fatalistic viewpoint and asserts his way of rationalistic thinking by saying that "our thinking and our sorrow have nothing to do with Fate, but human factors."<sup>5</sup> To him fatalism as a philosophy of life is not only bad and vicious in itself, but "trusting to fate" is a positive hindrance to human progress.<sup>6</sup> It devitalizes and demoralizes man, because "he who expects all from fate, lacks energetic human actions and endeavours and is bound to sink as he does not undertake to do anything or what he undertakes to do crumbles away or decays in the middle of his work."<sup>7</sup> Hence fatalism tells heavily upon the morale, dries up the spring of human action, and negates the principles of activism. Life thus loses its value and becomes worthless and useless.

Kautilya opines that life finds the prop in

<sup>5</sup> Meyer, p. 431.

<sup>6</sup> Meyer, pp. 400, 458; Shamasastri, pp. 321, 365.

<sup>7</sup> Meyer, p. 458; Shamasastri, p. 365.



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the fruitful direction of its powers and capacities. What he desires is not the aimlessness but a regimen of life. He lays great stress upon it as a principle that works through all different phases of life in order to sublimate and enrich its content. Human life without guidance and effective control will serve no useful purpose either to its individual self or to the social world in which it manifests itself. Instinctive human behaviourism as a crude expression of life is ill-desired. It is positively bad as it comes in clash with socialized and humanized instincts. Such a way of life leads not to the harmonization of social elements, but to their dislocation, discord, and disruption.

The ego-centric way deprives life of a norm and a content and a meaning. It sounds the death-knell of a socialized being. But life moulded on principles of self-education and self-culture justifies its existence and endows it with powers of social adjustment and mobility. This is a positive achievement



of man. Humanity is his forte; barbarity is thus destroyed in him. Kautilya's philosophy of activism is nothing but a forceful attempt at the culturalization of man and society in all its manifold activities. That the 'crude' man has to undergo a schooling in discipline with a view to chiselling his crudeness is the Kautilyan idea.

While using an all-comprehensive word—'vinaya'<sup>8</sup>—Kautilya gives his philosophy of education a wider scope and meaning. Then what is 'vinaya'? It is education, discipline, training, self-culture, self-refinement, self-training, and self-discipline. "It comprehends," writes Johann Jakob Meyer, "the whole and thorough training of the physical, mental, and ethical sides of human life. It lays special emphasis on the ethico-mental aspects. Hence it is the all-round culturalization and that too through constant learning and practice."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Meyer, p. 5; Shamasastri, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> Meyer, p. 5.



So the basis of the Kautilyan thought is in a definite and clear-cut system of education and culture. Kautilya remarks that 'vinaya' is acquired as well as inborn (instincts),<sup>10</sup> but its cultivation builds and forms human material (capacities).<sup>11</sup>

The whole Kautilyan system of education therefore aims at the development of human powers and capacities and has its roots in the knowledge of the 'sciences'. Kautilya makes it very plain in his Arthaśāstra that without acquaintance with the knowledge of the 'sciences' the ideal of 'vinaya' cannot become a reality, a practice, and a utility for the betterment of human beings. The 'sciences' are the repositories of all knowledge and power.

According to the different schools of the Arthaśāstric thought the 'sciences' are classed under different groups. The school of Manu

<sup>10</sup> Meyer, p. 5; Shamasastri, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Meyer, p. 5; Shamasastri, p. 10.



has three 'sciences'.<sup>12</sup> They comprise theology, economics, and the art of government; the

School of Bṛihaspati advocates two 'sciences':

(a) economics; (b) the art of government.<sup>13</sup>

It rejects theology (the three Vedas) as a source of knowledge and considers it a deceptive play of hide-and-seek and affords no test for judging the merits of men and things.<sup>14</sup>

The School of Uśanas represents only one science—<sup>15</sup> the science of politics. All that is claimed by other 'sciences' hangs on its existence.<sup>16</sup> It is in this science that all other 'sciences' have their origin and end.<sup>17</sup> But Kautilya definitely lays down that "four and only four are the sciences; wherefore it is from these sciences that all that concerns

<sup>12</sup> Meyer, p. 1; Shamasastṛy, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Meyer, p. 2; Shamasastṛy, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Shamasastṛy, p. 6; Meyer, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Meyer, p. 2; Shamasastṛy, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Meyer, p. 2; Shamasastṛy, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Shamasastṛy, p. 6.



righteousness and wealth is learnt."<sup>18</sup>

The knowledge of the usefulness of the earth (artha) and of the ethical good (dharma) makes these 'sciences' real sciences.<sup>19</sup> Their importance for the progress and welfare of man and society, according to Kautilya, lies in the full possession of the knowledge of these 'sciences'. For the materialization of the social and political order, as envisaged in the Kautilyan scheme, the earth becomes the centre of all human activity, creation, and progress. That is the reason why Kautilya calls (the earth "the artha").<sup>20</sup>

• Among the 'sciences' the science of anvīkshakī is given the first place in the scale of precedence. It comprises the philosophy of Sāṅkhya, Yoga, and Lokāyata.<sup>21</sup> It is the science of anvīkshakī that scrutinizes, analyzes,

<sup>18</sup> Shamastry, p. 6.; Meyer, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Meyer, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Shamastry, p. 515; Meyer, p. LVII, 663.

<sup>21</sup> Shamastry, p. 6; Meyer, p. 2.



and determines the righteous and unrighteous in theology, the advantage and disadvantage in the science of economics, the politic and im-politic in the science of government as well as the major and minor importance of all the sciences in their fundamentals; it also serves the world, establishes the correct perspective or insight into the causes of success and failure; develops the versatility of mind, fluency of speech, and business capacity; it is always considered as the light of all sciences, as the support of all transactions, as the foundation of all ethical commandments.<sup>22</sup>

The aim of the science of anvikshakî is to educate, culturalize, and discipline mind with a view to assessing discriminately the real value of things and to judge ulterior motives of human actions and behaviours. To sit on judgment over the affairs of the world, according to Kauṭilya, is only within the power

<sup>22</sup> Shamasasthya, p. 7; Meyer, p. 2.



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of the mind. The science of anvîkshakî endows one with philosophic outlook and sound reasoning and forms the only base for understanding the elusive ways of the world and prepares man for facing the social and political problems. The discipline of mind is an adequate and necessary human equipment. In order to realize the importance of the superiority and power of mind the science of anvîkshakî is to be studied. In the self-culture of man its power is supreme. Even success or failure in the worldly sense depends on the degree of attainment of mental training and discipline through the science of anvîkshakî. It is the master-key that unlocks all the gates to the treasures of knowledge.

721 The triple-Védas as a science comes next to the science of anvîkshakî. It inculcates precepts and principles for creating and establishing moral values and standards. The disciplined mind without moral background is neither educated nor cultured. The moral



equipment elevates and refines the disciplined mind and also develops positive virtues. The real contribution of man to the welfare of society and government can only be possible on the basis of moral action. All good work, according to Kautilya, emanates from a moral source.

The differentiation between right and wrong, good and evil, justice and injustice is due to moral education. The way to duties common to all, such as harmlessness, truthfulness, purity, freedom from spite, abstinence from cruelty, and forgiveness, is indicated in the triple-Védas as humanizing forces.<sup>23</sup> The social life of the community is to be modelled on the laws of the four orders of religious life and on the duties of the four castes<sup>24</sup> as laid down in the science of the triple-Vedas. It is a set-plan for the society to bring about a social mobility and to keep the balance of

<sup>23</sup> Shamasastri, p. 8; Meyer, pp. 3, 4.

<sup>24</sup> Shamasastri, p. 8; Meyer, p. 4.



social forces. But Kauṭilya lays great emphasis on the broad principles of ethics for the guidance of the life of the people. That "the observance of one's own duty leads one to svaraga and infinite bliss"<sup>25</sup> is the cultivated spirit of ethics that culturalizes life.

Among the 'sciences' the science of economics (vâṛta) holds the third position.<sup>26</sup> The productivity of wealth is its chief concern. It does not discuss the principles of wealth, production, and distribution. Kauṭilya is not an economist in the modern sense, nor an economic thinker. But he has known the value and power of wealth in the shaping of human destiny. What he advocates is the growth and development of the factors of wealth. Kauṭilya is no idealist, nor a rabid materialist, nor an ascetic; he is a man of flesh and blood, who loves the world because of its goodness, its productive powers, and its

<sup>25</sup> Śaṁśasastry, p. 8; Meyer, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Śaṁśasastry, p. 9; Meyer, p. 4.



utility; he is in fact world-centred; he visualizes in wealth a potentiality for bettering human life in regard to its material welfare.

The wealth is acquired and maintained by the exertion of man. It is foolish to expect that some other agency than the human one creates and utilizes it. For the capture of wealth the human mind must realize its importance as a material factor and concentrate upon the utilization of its materials. "Wealth will pass away," remarks Kautilya, "from that childish man who inquires most after the stars; for wealth is the star of wealth; what will the stars do?"<sup>27</sup> In the constant struggle for wealth man materializes his material aim. "Capable men," writes Kautilya, "will certainly secure wealth at least after a hundred trials; and wealth is bound by wealth just as elephants are bound by counter-elephants."<sup>28</sup> The non-productive wealth has

<sup>27</sup> Shamasastri, p. 424; Meyer, p. 542.

<sup>28</sup> Shamasastri, p. 424; Meyer, p. 542.



no inherent power to produce or create. Acquiring wealth for non-productive purposes is a moribund idea. Its power only lies in its productivity and circulation, *i.e.*, the development of the material resources of the earth.

The science of *vârta*, according to Kauṭilya, teaches the essentials for acquiring and maintaining wealth for human ends and purposes. All acts or works that strike at the root of material welfare are harmful and detrimental to human interests. Kauṭilya has no appreciation for gross materialistic philosophy. It is to him a perverted outlook on life and world, but material aspiration and well-being serves human life in order to relieve it of its wants and requirements. It has a subordinate duty to discharge towards human beings.

Though it is an important factor in life, yet it is not the essence of life; it certainly improves and betters the prospects of life, but it does not make life fundamentally happy. The potentialities of human personality are



developed by wealth factor because of creative and productive work in the field of economics. The non-wealth attitude of life starves out the life-force itself due to the lack of material incentive. So wealth in human hands comes to its conscious purpose and becomes power in the life of society and the state. The hereafter as well as the ascetic ideal is an enemy of wealth. It is only through the agency of productive wealth that life in full bloom of work and activity can achieve the ideal of vâta. According to Kauṭilya wealth is the real support of social and political life.<sup>29</sup>

The science of daṇḍanîti<sup>30</sup>, i.e., the science of government comes last among the 'sciences'. Kauṭilya does not agree with his teacher Uśanas. The School of Uśanas recognizes the science of government as the only science—the origin and end of all other sciences.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Shamasasttry, p. 999; Meyer, p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Shamasasttry, pp. 6, 9; Meyer, p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Shamasasttry, p. 6.



But Kauṭilya does not subscribe to the opinion that the origin of institutions—social, religious, economic—is due to political factors. Politics is not the source of culture and civilization. It has its own limited range of effectiveness. Politics undoubtedly has to play its own part in the evolution of human society. Uśanas was a thoroughbred politician to whom the importance of social sciences was nil. That the science of government is the mother of all 'sciences' is the viewpoint of Uśanas.

The Kauṭilyian standpoint broadbases politics. The social evolution is not the outcome of the laws of politics, but it is dependent upon the sociological factors. Kauṭilya does not underestimate or deny the importance of the science of government, but places it in the position of a guardian spirit among the 'sciences'. It is not politics alone that can bring to life all that is worth having or achieving. As a corrective and preservative its function is mostly needed. The law



of politics stands out pre-eminent among the social, religious, and economic laws. It recognizes the law of Dharma and preserves it.

In the Kautilyan scheme all the four 'sciences' hold their assigned positions. All are considered real and positive. These have to discharge their individual function for the all-round progress of society and the state. None of these is to be ignored and sacrificed for the sake of the other. The relationship between all the 'sciences' is interlinked and interdependent. These 'sciences' represent the different phases of social, religious, economic, and political life of the people. As all different aspects of the life of the community taken as a whole reflect the activity of society in its totality, so the four 'sciences' are there to foster and encourage all the different aspects of the activities of society.

What is *dandanīti*? Kautilya says that "danda is the law of punishment; the science of



government daṇḍanîti.”<sup>32</sup> In the ordinary parlance daṇḍa no doubt conveys the meaning of general punishment. But the term, daṇḍanîti, used in the sense of the science of government or politics in the *Arthaśâstra* of Kautilya, does not mean the law of punishment. The law of punishment is one of the many aspects of the laws of politics. It is a negative force, but daṇḍanîti is something very positive, real, and assertive. It connotes sceptre, political authority, law of the state. Kautilya himself explains its conceptual significance by saying “that sceptre on which the well-being and progress of the sciences of anvīkshakī, the triple-Vēdas, and vārta depend is known as daṇḍa.”<sup>33</sup> Here daṇḍa is not used in the sense of punishment, but the supreme political authority which is empowered to bring about “the well-being and progress of the sciences.” Hence it is aptly observed that the ‘sciences’

<sup>32</sup> Shamasastri, p. 9; Meyer, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> Shamasastri, p. 9; Meyer, p. 4.



take their root in sceptre.<sup>34</sup>

The final authority is the paramount law of the state that keeps vigil over the affairs of the world. The aim of daṇḍanîti is to examine the political causes of "nayânyan"—right, justice, legality, expediency as well as wrong, injustice, illegality, inexpediency—and also of "balâbale"—power, authority, might as well as powerless and weak.<sup>35</sup> Kauṭilya is therefore against the wielding of sceptre on unjust and despotic principles, because daṇḍanîti is bound to its own law of survival. With deep conviction he brushes aside the viewpoint of his teacher who writes: "Whoever is desirous of the progress of the world shall ever hold the sceptre raised (udyatandaṇḍa). Never can there be a better instrument than the sceptre to bring the people under control."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Meyer, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> Shamasastri, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> Shamasastri, p. 9; Meyer, p. 4.



The political authority loses its effectiveness and forgoes its justification and defeats its purpose, if its ways are erratic. Its success is in the propriety of use.<sup>37</sup> For Kautilya says that its despotic expressions are repulsive to the people and its lenient ways are contemptible, but it is respected and honoured if it sticks to the law of propriety.<sup>38</sup> Thus the law of the state has a hold on the affections of the people who become devoted to the cause of righteousness and enjoyment of the productive works of wealth.<sup>39</sup> Repressive laws of the state, under the influence of greed, anger, or owing to ignorance, excite the fury and wrath of the people<sup>40</sup> because they are unjust.

The political authority based on principles of justice is in itself a desirable good and is considered the bed-rock of society and the

<sup>37</sup> Shamasastri, p. 9; Meyer, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> Shamasastri, p. 9; Meyer, p. 5.

<sup>39</sup> Shamasastri, p. 9; Meyer, p. 5.

<sup>40</sup> Shamasastri, p. 9; Meyer, p. 5.



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state. Under its protection human welfare is promoted.<sup>41</sup> In its absence or abeyance the 'law of fishes' (mâtsyanyâyamudbhâvayati) prevails, where disorder and anarchy reign supreme.<sup>42</sup> The existence of the law of the state is the prime factor in establishing and restoring peace and order, in administering equitable justice; in protecting the weak against the strong; in stopping exploitation of the powerless by the powerful; in making life enjoyable for both—the strong as well as the weak. The political authority stands for safety, security, protection, welfare, and progress of all people under the state. "The stability and progress of the world (lokâyatra)" is the objective of the dandanîti.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Meyer, p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> Meyer, p. 5; Shamasastri, p. 10.

<sup>43</sup> Meyer, p. 4; Shamasastri, p. 9.



## CHAPTER II

### KINGSHIP







# Kingship

In the Arthaśâstra of Kauṭilya the idea of kingship is all-pervading. That everything depends on kingship is the cardinal principle of Kauṭilya.<sup>1</sup> His belief in the personality as well as the institution of kingship is deep-rooted and unshakable. The life-work of kingship consists in the preservation of the world order and the well-being and welfare of the people; it is the root of all human progress; it bears the heavy burden of the state with preparedness to work, willingness to discharge duties, readiness to guide and control the affairs of the people.

The unreal and nominal kingship does not exist in the Kauṭilyian Arthaśâstra. To Kauṭilya it is a moral conception, a dynamic principle, a norm of values, a self-realization

<sup>1</sup> Shamasastri: The Arthaśâstra of Kauṭilya, p. 519; Johann Jakob Meyer: Das Arthaśâstra des Kauṭilya, p. 667.



in the disciplines of politics and economics. As the three 'sciences' are dependent upon the science of government for their well-being and progress, so kingship has its root in the three sciences.<sup>2</sup> That kingship is a living process in determining its own intrinsic values is expressed in the principle of 'vinaya.'<sup>3</sup> It self-educates, self-disciplines, and self-cultures and in this way kingship realizes its own self.<sup>4</sup> That 'vinaya' is the abode of its spirit, the foundation of its superstructure, is the Kautilian idea. Hence kingship is a meaning, a value, and a fulfilment. The principle of good government and the value of upliftment of the people can only become an actuality in kingship, "well-educated and disciplined in sciences."

The unfoldment of potentialities in king-

<sup>2</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 5, 10; Meyer, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Shamasastri, p. 10; Meyer, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Shamasastri, p. 5; Meyer, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Shamasastri, p. 11; Meyer, p. 7, 14.



ship is only possible through a course of education in discipline and culture. This makes it a living embodiment of cultural and disciplinary values. Kautilya explains away the disciplinary aspect of self-education not as a puritanic outlook on life or a negative existence. It is an accomplished positive virtue, a 'Lebensbejahung,' an additional strength and force to kingly character. The all-round development of the personality of kingship on the principle of 'vinaya' is the Kautilyan thought of basic importance.<sup>6</sup>

Discipline is not a theory, nor an external imposition. It is neither an expression of outward behaviourism nor a mystical formula. It is born out of life, because in the process of actual living it forms shape and gathers force and impetus; it is the actual culturalization of life-forces. Association with the disciplined votaries of knowledge is its magic-wand.<sup>7</sup> The

<sup>6</sup> Shamasastri, p. 319; Meyer, pp. 397, 398.

<sup>7</sup> Shamasastri, p. 11; Meyer, p. 6.



system of 'vinaya' is a preparation for politics and a coming-in-contact with realism of the world for the Kauṭilyian kingship. Even in the substratum of the Kauṭilyian world of thought political wisdom lies buried in the amber of a moral principle—the conquest and mastery of senses.<sup>8</sup>

That "the sole aim of all the sciences is nothing but restraint of the organs of sense" is synonymous with the aim of kingship as the mastery of expert knowledge and the cultivation of self-culture show the way to the conquest of senses.<sup>9</sup> The Kauṭilyian motive in the mastery of the organs of sense is the complete suppression of those senses that do not humanize kingship, but bring about its decay. A way for a better life-equipment for kingship is shown in overthrowing the 'six enemies'.<sup>10</sup> Restraint of the organs of sense

<sup>8</sup> Meyer, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 5, 12; Meyer, pp. 7, 14.

<sup>10</sup> Shamasastri, p. 13; Meyer, p. 8.



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is no hindrance in the pathway of kingship to promote on a large scale positive good in the life of the people. It assists not only in the political, economic, and religious development of the country, but also leads to the establishment of laws of social conduct with a view to maintaining harmonious relations and conditions among the people, as human adjustment is not possible on the basis of anti-social instincts and behaviour. Kingship, that pays no heed and attention to such essentials, soon perishes, though possessed of the whole earth.<sup>11</sup>

• The 'six enemies'<sup>12</sup>—lust, anger, greed, vanity, haughtiness, pleasure—have played historical roles in bringing about the downfall of kingdoms in their own way.<sup>13</sup> This is the verdict of Kautilya on the basis of historical data. He has warned kingship of the 'danger-

<sup>11</sup> Shamasastry, p. 12; Meyer, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Shamasastry, p. 397; Meyer, pp. 501, 502.

<sup>13</sup> Shamasastry, pp. 12, 13; Meyer, pp. 7, 8.



spots' in order to steer the ship of the state clear of the shoal. This can safely be done by the efficacious principle of 'vinaya' and restraint of the organs of sense as life-principle. Hence the development of the personality and character of kingship is the basic factor in the Kautilyan art of politics.

The "amiable qualities" of kingship promote the "elements of sovereignty."<sup>14</sup> In its absence the "progressive and loyal elements of the kingdom" are destroyed by the very hands of kingship.<sup>15</sup> It is difficult to maintain sovereignty, if kingship lacks character; has hatred of the science of polity and inborn proclivity to evil ways.<sup>16</sup> It is in the acquired political wisdom and the disciplined way that kingship becomes a legitimate power supported by its own people. Otherwise it falls an easy

<sup>14</sup> Shamasastri, p. 321; Meyer, p. 401.

<sup>15</sup> Shamasastri, p. 321; Meyer, p. 401.

<sup>16</sup> Shamasastri, p. 311; Meyer, pp. 385, 386.



prey either to the fury of its subjects or into the clutches of the enemies.<sup>17</sup>

Kauṭilya brings out in bold relief the real significance of kingship after it has been shaped and cast in the sciences of discipline, as the existence of a real kingship is a matter of grave importance for the state and the people. Even in the sociological literature of ancient India the science of discipline as a factor in the education and culture of kingship holds a prominent place. The devotion to work is aroused in kingship by tapas. The Mahabharata dubs a king as the old holy ascetic (tapah puranam). Through tapas kingship comes into its own, because it signifies the control over soul force and senses and the conservation of all human energies for a purpose. Nearly the same idea finds its repetition in the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya. The whole philosophy of disci-

<sup>17</sup> Shamasastri, p. 321; Meyer, p. 401.



pline in the Kautilyan sense is so markedly defined by Johann Jakob Meyer in his Introduction: "Das wahre und einzige Königreich ist das selbst-gezügelter Ich."<sup>18</sup>

The king, observes Kautilya, is the kingdom—the state-factors.<sup>19</sup> The idea of '*L'état c'est moi*' is expressed here with clarity and precision. It qualifies and broadbases kingship. That kingship is the most important factor in the state is discussed by Kautilya *in extenso*.<sup>20</sup> Its goal is the goal of the state. Kingship is the spirit and the state is its expression. It embodies the basic ideas of the state. One without the other is inconceivable. The life of kingship is the state. Both are inseparable. Co-existence is their law. The politicized expressions of kingship reach their climax in the state. The welfare of the state depends

<sup>18</sup> Meyer, p. LXVII.

<sup>19</sup> Shamasastri, p. 395; Meyer, p. 497.

<sup>20</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 315, 316, 317, 318; Meyer, pp. 392, 393, 394, 395, 396.



upon kingship. It automatically becomes the symbol of sovereignty, the crown, and the flag. Kauṭilya sums up the essence of kingship thus: "Everything depends upon the king; he is the central pivot as it were."<sup>21</sup>

The political writers of ancient India always stressed the point of relationship between kingship and the people. Kauṭilya also knows its importance. "As the king, so his people" is also expressed by him.<sup>22</sup> That the people imitate their king is a political axiom. He is a model to them. So kingship culturalizes or de-culturalizes the life of the people according to its virtues or vices. As the aim of kingship in the light of the sciences is the betterment and progress of the world, so it thereby promotes its own healthy development. Its life of action, activity, and creativeness infuses the spirit of creative and productive work into

<sup>21</sup> Shamasastri, p. 519; Meyer, p. 667.

<sup>22</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 42, 393; Meyer, pp. 46, 493.



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the people.<sup>23</sup> If it negates active principles, its works not only go to the wall but also the inactive life of the people eats into the work of kingship.<sup>24</sup>

Kingship symbolizes a principle of eternal activism, dynamic in expression as well as in fruitfulness. It is the ever-vigilant active force in the person of a king that serves as an instrument in enlivening all the elements of the state. "Of a king," remarks Kauṭilya, "the religious vow is his readiness to action; satisfactory discharge of duties is his performance of sacrifice; equal attention to all is the offer of fees and ablution towards consecration."<sup>25</sup> Responsibilities of kingship are tantamount to religious duties in their sanctity of purpose. They cannot be ignored without their infringement. In the same way kingship cannot forgo its obligations to the state and the people

<sup>23</sup> Shamasastri, p. 42; Meyer, p. 46.

<sup>24</sup> Shamasastri, p. 42; Meyer, p. 46.

<sup>25</sup> Shamasastri, p. 44; Meyer, p. 48.



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without forgoing the right of its lawful existence. These are born with kingship. They are in it. The Kauṭilyian school of discipline prepares it for a full-life responsibility which cannot be shouldered by any ordinary mortal. Their discharge justifies the office of kingship. Without paying back in full the debt of obligation it loses its privilege and lives a phantom-existence.

The futileless kingship is a contradiction in terms and a living farce. Only in the discharge of duties towards the state and the people kingship self-realizes. The activism in kingship is essential; it keeps the world going because kingship is kingdom and kingdom the people.<sup>26</sup> "In the happiness of his subjects," observes Kauṭilya, "lies his happiness; in their welfare his welfare. What pleases him he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Shāmasastry, p. 486; Meyer, p. 628.

<sup>27</sup> Shāmasastry, p. 44; Meyer, p. 48.



The real happiness and welfare of kingship is not in its self-centred activity and behaviour. The purpose of kingship to exist for its own sake is a destructive principle. To live and enjoy the fruits of the earth with all the people is a commendable act and justifies its existence in its own as well as in the eyes of the people. In other words, it should endear itself to the people by bringing them in contact with wealth and doing good to them and keeping away from unrighteous and uneconomic acts.<sup>28</sup> Thus not violating principles of righteousness and economics, it can enjoy its desires.<sup>29</sup>

Kautilya welcomes the idea of gratification of material aspirations for kingship as well, because it is not a piece of wood, senseless, insensate, emotionless, and desireless. What he attempts to bring home to kingship is the materialization of material aspirations and desires as a healthy expression of human

<sup>28</sup> Shamasastri, p. 13; Meyer, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> Shamasastri, p. 14; Meyer, p. 9.



activity. He does not like the ascetic in kingship. It shall, says Kautilya, never be devoid of happiness but it should enjoy in an equal degree the three pursuits of life—dharma, artha, and Kama—which are interdependent upon one another. And any one of these three, when enjoyed to an excess, hurts not only the other two, but also kingship.<sup>30</sup>

The development of all the three aspects—dharma, artha, and kama—in their respective importance makes the life complete. Negligence of any of these hinders and hampers the growth of life in its normal way. These are the life-promoting factors for the happiness of the king as well as of the people. Kingship thus assumes greatness in the actualization of the highest aim of humanity—the happiness and welfare of the people. In the words of J. J. Meyer, out of the trifles of the world, it goes into the Great.<sup>31</sup> In this way Kautilya

<sup>30</sup> Shamasastri, p. 14; Meyer, p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Meyer, p. LXVII.



shows the road to greatness by energizing and activating the people as a whole.

“For their progress or downfall the people depend upon the king; the king is, as it were, the aggregate of the people.”<sup>32</sup> Kautilya further points out that “when the king is well off, by his welfare and prosperity, he pleases the people.”<sup>33</sup> The prosperity and welfare of the people is also the prosperity and welfare of kingship. Hence kingship surcharged with principles of discipline and creativeness will be instrumental in creating wealth (the earthly good, benefit, and profit), because, Kautilya says, the creative activity is the root of wealth.<sup>34</sup>

As Kautilya has made a thorough study of kingship he discusses in his Arthaśāstra the psychology of different types of kingship. He draws a comparison between a ‘blind’

<sup>32</sup> Shamasastri, p. 392; Meyer, p. 493.

<sup>33</sup> Shamasastri, p. 392; Meyer, p. 493.

<sup>34</sup> Shamasastri, p. 44; Meyer, p. 48.



and an 'erring' kingship. To him both kingships are bad and there is something fundamentally wrong about them. But in the 'blind' kingship improvement can set in. The 'erring' kingship suffers from mental aberration, weakness, and lassitude, and brings about its destruction by maladministration, as it is bent on doing what is against the science of polity.<sup>35</sup> Though the 'blind' kingship, having no eye in sciences, lacks the power of discriminative work or activity, it is obdurate and guided by whims of others. Through maladministration it also destroys the kingdom, but Kautilya is a bit hopeful about it and says that it can save the kingdom, if supporters come to its succour.<sup>36</sup>

Kautilya further analyzes in a comparative manner a 'diseased' kingship and a 'new' kingship. The latter does not appeal nor carry conviction to him. He sees in it the spirit of

<sup>35</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 395, 396; Meyer, p. 498.

<sup>36</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 395, 396; Meyer, p. 498.



a reckless adventurer only and a lack of control over the elements of the state. This phase of kingship can have no permanent base or stake in the country and comes to naught easily. Kauṭilya remarks that "a new king pleases the people by such popular deeds as the observance of his own duties and the acts of bestowing favours, remission (of taxes), gifts, and presents upon others.....begins to act as he pleases under the impression that the country, acquired by his own might, belongs to himself; when pressed by combined kings (for plunder), he tolerates their oppression of the country or having no firm control over the elements of the state, he is easily removed." There<sup>37</sup> are no doubt quite a number of risks with a 'diseased' kingship but as it continues to observe its duties, it will survive.<sup>38</sup>

Which is better, a weak but high-born king, or a strong but a low-born? While

<sup>37</sup> Shamasastri, p. 396; Meyer, p. 499.

<sup>38</sup> Shamasastri, p. 396; Meyer, p. 499.



answering the question Kauṭilya prefers a 'high-born' to a 'low-born' kingship. "No, a people will naturally," says Kauṭilya, "obey a high-born king though he is weak; for the tendency of a prosperous people is to follow a high-born king."<sup>39</sup> The 'weak but high-born' kingship cannot be condemned outright. Its basis is sound. Though it may be weak in certain elements of sovereignty, it can become strong. Its 'high-born'-ness is considered a positive virtue, as it is trained in the principle of 'vinaya' and possesses political wisdom and is also a protector and well-wisher of the people. The powers of its accomplished personality will remove its weakness and make it strong.<sup>40</sup> That is the reason why the people see in it "a possession of virtues" and are its friends.

The 'strong but low-born' kingship is an evil in itself, because it will be deserted by

<sup>39</sup> Shamasastri, p. 396; Meyer, p. 499.

<sup>40</sup> Shamasastri, p. 321; Meyer, p. 401.



its people who do not like it, lest they come to grief under it.<sup>41</sup> It is similar to a 'wicked' kingship that destroys the most prosperous and loyal elements of its kingdom.<sup>42</sup> Even the people will not tolerate the rule of a 'strong but low-born' king, because he is devoid of virtues, but the weak though high-born kingship attracts them, because of his virtues.<sup>43</sup>

Kauṭilya also knows the inherent defects of a divided rule or rule of a country by two kings. This system of government is worthless and perishes because of mutual hatred, partiality, and rivalry.<sup>44</sup>

In the same strain Kauṭilya pours out his anathema on the foreign rule. During his time the northern parts of India had witnessed the invasion of Alexander the Great who temporarily established his government and politi-

<sup>41</sup> Shamasastri, p. 364; Meyer, p. 458.

<sup>42</sup> Shamasastri, p. 321; Meyer, p. 401.

<sup>43</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 321, 396; Meyer, pp. 401, 499.

<sup>44</sup> Shamasastri, p. 395; Meyer, p. 497.



cal control over the conquered territories. Kauṭilya must have studied the sinister effects of the foreign rule on the country and the people. "Foreign rule, which comes into existence," remarks Kauṭilya, "by seizing the country from its king still alive, thinks that the country is not its own, impoverishes it, and carries off its wealth, or treats it as a commercial article; and when the country ceases to love it, it retires abandoning the country."<sup>45</sup>

The aim of Kauṭilya in making a comparative study of different types of kingship is to bring out the glaring importance of the real kingship. He keenly warns the real kingship of the dangers of deterioration and degradation that can overwhelm it and dissolve it into nothingness, if it goes off the tangent.<sup>46</sup> "Internal troubles" Kauṭilya says, "are more serious than external troubles which are like

<sup>45</sup> Shāmasastry, p. 395; Meyer, pp. 497, 498.

<sup>46</sup> Shāmasastry, pp. 341, 342; Meyer, pp. 425, 426.



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the danger arising from a lurking snake."<sup>47</sup>

That kingship can make and unmake itself is too obvious to Kauṭilya. It can be its own best friend or its worst enemy.<sup>48</sup> The survival of the fittest is the law of kingship and it should ever be conscious of the working of nefarious influences behind or in kingship. Its wisdom lies in prolonging the existence and promoting the cause. Kingship is many-faced. So far we have seen it as the sovereign power, the upholder of dharma, the protector and well-wisher of the people. The conqueror, as it is depicted in the Arthaśâstra of Kauṭilya, will now deserve our attention.

The conqueror is the climax of kingship. Kauṭilya does not rest satisfied with the existence of a kingship unless it plays its last but chief role as a conqueror. "The king," observes Kauṭilya, "who, being possessed of good character and best-fitted elements of

<sup>47</sup> Shamasastri, p. 395; Meyer, p. 497.

<sup>48</sup> Shamasastri, p. 321; Meyer, p. 400.



sovereignty, is the fountain of policy, is termed the conqueror."<sup>49</sup> The political ambition of kingship fulfils in the career of a conqueror. The principle of governance for kingship as well as the conqueror is the same.<sup>50</sup>

The 'vijigishu' is the ultimate realization of the aims of kingship. He who wishes to conquer, subdue, and capture is the 'vijigishu'. It signifies the aspirant after sovereignty, one desirous of conquest, the expansionist, or the imperialist. "Whoever is acquainted," remarks Kautilya, "with the science of polity should clearly observe the conditions of progress, deterioration, stagnation, reduction, and destruction as well as the use of all kinds of strategic means."<sup>51</sup> This is how the conqueror does the spade-work with a view to conquering and capturing the world.

<sup>49</sup> Shamasastri, p. 322; Meyer, p. 402.

<sup>50</sup> Shamasastri, p. 491; Meyer, p. 635.

<sup>51</sup> Shamasastri, p. 389; Meyer, p. 491.



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The work of the conqueror is more difficult and arduous than that of the king. The conqueror undertakes the stupendous to achieve. With kingship the activities are limited to its own kingdom, but the conqueror's activities are limitless and beyond territories. Kautilya does not impose so much restriction on kingship as on the conqueror. Kingship marks off and falls into shade before the conqueror. The first concern of a conqueror is to weigh comparatively his strength and weakness as well as his enemy's; to foresee the consequences of things—loss of men and money, victory and failure—; to acquire full power and to possess the 'quality' of skill for intrigue.<sup>52</sup> If all is not possible, the idea of conquest may be abandoned. The conqueror then shrivels into a kingship. Therefore the success of the conquest scheme depends on how the conqueror is preparing

<sup>52</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 411, 412; Meyer, pp. 521, 522.



the ground with a view to winning over political forces of a conquered country.<sup>53</sup> The presence of a conqueror is not to terrorize but to infuse confidence and to keep intact the *status quo* under his sovereignty.

The conquest idea in the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya is the idea of sovereignty over the vassal states, but not their complete destruction or absorption into the conqueror's empire. The conqueror is in fact no usurper but a Lord of lords. His political vanity is tickled or ambition fulfilled in the full recognition of his sovereign powers by other vassal kings. The idea of chakravartin as the idea of the Kauṭilyian state is thus actualized in the person of a real conqueror.

After the conquest it becomes the prime duty of the conqueror not only to pacify, but also to identify himself with the conquered. Their welfare and betterment is his welfare

Conqueror  
&  
Conquered

<sup>53</sup> Shamasastri, p. 380; Meyer, pp. 478, 479.



and betterment. He takes up the position of a real protector of the conquered people and fathers them. Kauṭilya is very definite on this point and to him the fatherly treatment and behaviour of a conqueror towards the conquered is the only justification for the conqueror's presence in or hold on a conquered country.

"Having acquired a new territory," Kauṭilya remarks, "he should cover the enemy's vices with his own virtues, and the enemy's virtues by doubling his own virtues, by strict observance of his own duties, by attending to his works, by bestowing rewards, by remitting taxes, by giving gifts, and by bestowing honours. He should follow the friends and leaders of the people. He should give rewards, as promised, to those who deserted the enemy for his cause; he should also offer rewards to them as often as they render help to him; for whoever fails to fulfil his promises becomes untrustworthy both to his



own and his enemy's people. Whoever acts against the will of the people will also become unreliable. He should adopt the same mode of life, the same dress, language, and customs as those of the people. He should follow the people in their faith with which they celebrate their national, religious, and congregational festivals or amusements. His spies should often bring home to the mind of the leaders of provinces, villages, castes, and corporations, the hurt inflicted on the enemies in contrast with the high esteem and favour, with which they are treated by the conqueror, who finds his own prosperity in theirs. He should please them by giving gifts, remitting taxes, and providing for their security. He should always hold religious life in high esteem. Learned men, orators, charitable and brave persons should be favoured with gifts of lands and money and with remission of taxes. He should release all the prisoners and afford help to miserable, helpless, and diseased persons.



Having abolished those customs and transactions which he might consider either as injurious to the growth of his revenue and army or as unrighteous, he should establish righteous transactions. Whoever has caused excitement to the people or incurred their displeasure should be removed. He should imitate the observance of all those customs, which, though righteous and practised by others, are not observed in his own country, and give no room for the practice of whatever is unrighteous, though observed by others.”<sup>54</sup>

Kauṭilya also classifies the conqueror under three heads: (1) a just conqueror; (2) a demon-like conqueror; (3) a greedy conqueror. A just conqueror as a ‘dharma-vijayin’ is the ideal of Kauṭilya. He is satisfied with mere obeisance (surrender, submission).<sup>55</sup> Kingdom-taking is not his poli-

<sup>54</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 491, 492, 493; Meyer, pp. 635, 636, 637.

<sup>55</sup> Shamasastri, p. 461; Meyer, p. 549.



tical objective but the recognition of the principle of paramount law by others. For Kautilya he is a conducive, not destructive force. Hence his protection should be sought by weak kings.<sup>56</sup>

The 'greedy' conqueror has no ulterior principle, nor has he any wish to play the role of a real conqueror. "Land and money" are his conquest motives.<sup>57</sup> He can never succeed in establishing his sovereignty, because the weak king satisfies such a conqueror with wealth.<sup>58</sup> His influence is vicious, because he drains off the material resources of the countries of other kings.

The 'demon-like' conqueror is an atrocity, a horror, and a dread for countries. He represents the cruel and inhuman aspect of the conqueror. "The demon-like conqueror," observes Kautilya, "satisfies himself not merely

<sup>56</sup> Shamasastri, p. 461; Meyer, p. 594.

<sup>57</sup> Shamasastri, p. 461; Meyer, p. 594.

<sup>58</sup> Shamasastri, p. 461; Meyer, p. 594.



by seizing the land, treasure, sons and wives of the conquered, but by taking the life of the latter.”<sup>59</sup> Kautilya has not discussed the point to its logical conclusion. What reactions the ‘demon-like’ conqueror would create in conquered countries is left to our imagination. He only throws out a suggestion that the offer of “land and wealth” by kings would keep him away. This clearly indicates that the ‘demon-like’ conqueror is a pest and his visitation in other lands is epidemical.

<sup>59</sup> Shamasastri, p. 462; Meyer, p. 595.



CHAPTER III

THE STATE







In the political literature of ancient India the state is depicted as the outcome of a forced necessity for the welfare of humanity. The law is the state, lawlessness its negation. Anarchy and chaos and exploitation reign supreme where the state does not exist or is in abeyance. An ordered existence of life—political, social, religious, economic—finds its expression, development, and growth in the birth of a state. The law of the brute is the law of Nature. Power, unlimited, unchecked, indisciplined, and irresponsible, is the eternal voice in the state of Nature. The survival of the strong, the powerful, and the forceful in the state of Nature means the non-existence of the weak. The state of Nature accommodates only the brute who accepts its laws as supreme.

A state-less man has no legitimate inter-



ests to safeguard and promote. Human life is permanently exposed to imminent dangers and uncertainties. Wealth is a booty-attraction. Personal property is at stake. Social duties and obligations, if they exist at all, are nullified. Peace and happiness of home and family life are wrecked by the free play of brutal instincts. Morality is unknown. Exploitation of all by all is the routine of the day. Man is cruel, black-hearted, and egoistic; he is a 'cave-man', not a socialized human creature. The weak goes to dogs and is a victim of the strong who lords the world.

The state-less state is a continual warfare of one against the other struggling for the mastery of the law of the jungle. No government, no organization, no society, no peace, no progress exist there. Such is the opposite of all that goes by the name of ordered, regulated, systematized, organized efforts of man and society. There is no appeal, no charm, no attraction, no inducement,



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no creativeness, no construction, no building up in the sociological sense in the state of Nature. Man becomes a Man only in the state where he is developed, educated, cultured, disciplined, and sublimated. Kauṭilya also knows the futility of the life of lawlessness and destruction. He visualizes the state of Nature in the 'Law of Fishes' (mâtsyanyâya).<sup>1</sup>

The king of all remedies for political, social, religious, economic chaos is the usurpation of the power-of-all-for-the-destruction-of-all by one Man who has to dictate terms to all and wield his unchallenged and unquestioned power for the good of all. This one-man power is symbolized in kingship. Danda is its mainstay—its supreme strength—which functions on just and legitimate principles. It kills the spirit of the law of the jungle and inculcates the principle of social good, social harmony and adjustment. It is not for

<sup>1</sup> Shamasastry: The Arthaśâstra of Kauṭilya, p. 26.



the strong that the power of kingship has come into existence, but its purpose is to make the weak protected and unmolested; it puts an end to the state of warfare, and inaugurates the state of peace for the furtherance of the happiness of the people; it assists in the co-operative and co-ordinated human efforts for the general good and solidarity.

At last Man's supreme law is superseded by the more supreme socio-divine laws for his own well-being and welfare as well as for the well-being and welfare of all. Thus kingship becomes an upholder of all the laws—political, social, moral, and economic. The king is a god and a super-man combined in one. Peace and order, welfare and progress take the place of anarchy and chaos, lawlessness and destruction. This is achieved by the all-powerful political organization—the state—of which kingship is the spirit. Sovereignty is in the state; kingship is its strongest pivot, its 'best-fitted' element, and its life-blood.



According to Kauṭilya the state comprises the king, the minister, the country, the fort, the treasury, the army, and the friend.<sup>2</sup> These seven 'limbs' or 'elements' establish the sovereignty of the state. The ordered existence of the 'limbs' of the state is the greatest concern of Kauṭilya. The factors that tend to deteriorate and disintegrate the elements of the state cannot be overlooked and ignored, or viewed with indifference. It is not politic to do so, but is a political blunder.

"When the calamities," observes Kauṭilya, "of a single element tend to destroy the rest of the elements, those calamities, whether they be of the fundamental or any other element, are verily serious."<sup>3</sup> The state has to determine the comparative importance of the various elements of sovereignty.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Shamasastri: *The Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya*, p. 319; Johann Jakob Meyer: *Das Arthaśāstra des Kauṭilya*, p. 397.

<sup>3</sup> Shamasastri, p. 319; Meyer, p. 397.

<sup>4</sup> Shamasastri, p. 394; Meyer, p. 496.



To be in possession of full knowledge of facts—the extent, affection, and strength of the serviceable part as well as the progressive and declining tendencies—is in the vital interests of the state itself.<sup>5</sup> To keep a watchful eye on its own development is highly essential as it assists in rooting out the causes of decay in body politic.

Kauṭilya's political faith in the indispensability of all the elements of sovereignty surges up in the form of a frontal attack on the disintegrating forces within the state. Strong measures have always to be taken for the consolidation of the kingdom and the absolute sovereignty.<sup>6</sup> This can also be achieved by developing to the full all the best qualities of all the elements of the state.<sup>7</sup> "Their excellent characteristics" are like adhesive forces

<sup>5</sup> Shamasastri, p. 394; Meyer, p. 496.

<sup>6</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 315, 316, 317, 318, 342; Meyer, pp. 392, 394, 395, 396, 426.

<sup>7</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 319, 320; Meyer, pp. 397, 398, 399.



that go to strengthen the foundation of the state.<sup>8</sup> The state has its vital constituents in them. They can retain their powerful characteristics only on the unflinching support of kingship.

Kautilya is of the opinion that the elements of the state progress or decay with the progress or decay of kingship. "The poor and miserable elements of sovereignty" can only be saved from deterioration by the forceful influence of kingship which can really make them strong and prosperous.<sup>9</sup> Even "the most prosperous and loyal elements" of the state can be doomed to perdition if kingship lacks its cultural and disciplinary force.<sup>10</sup> The aim of the state can thus be achieved with the best-fitted elements of sovereignty<sup>11</sup>. The impetus and initiative come from the 'perfect' kingship for the materializa-

<sup>8</sup> Shamasastri, p. 321; Meyer, p. 400.

<sup>9</sup> Shamasastri, p. 321; Meyer, p. 401.

<sup>10</sup> Shamasastri, p. 321; Meyer, p. 401.

<sup>11</sup> Shamasastri, p. 321; Meyer, p. 401.



tion of the objective of the state.<sup>12</sup>

The state has to play its part of politico-historic importance among other sovereign states.<sup>13</sup> This brings out its main effect and generates political forces in the domain of politics. The real strength of the states is tested and determined by the circles of states.<sup>14</sup> There are in all four primary circles of states—(1) the conqueror's circle of states; (2) the enemy's circle of states; (3) the Madhyama king's circle of states; (4) the neutral king's circle of states, consisting of twelve kings, sixty elements of sovereignty, and seventy-two elements of the states. Each of the twelve primary kings has his elements of sovereignty, power, as well as his end.<sup>15</sup>

As 'happiness' is the end of each of these states, so the cultivation of their strength is

<sup>12</sup> Shamasastri, p. 321; Meyer, p. 401.

<sup>13</sup> Shamasastri, p. 323; Meyer, p. 403.

<sup>14</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 323, 324; Meyer, pp. 403, 404.

<sup>15</sup> Shamasastri, p. 324; Meyer, p. 404.



a *sine qua non*, because strength breeds power and power brings happiness.<sup>16</sup> The use of power in different forms by the states for the mastery of their political supremacy is the unconditional law.<sup>17</sup> The determining factor in political precedence and pre-eminence is "the possession of power and happiness in a greater degree."<sup>18</sup> Hence the state shall always endeavour to augment its own power and elevate its happiness.<sup>19</sup> The circles of states are different 'façades' of kingship with different grades. Their success or failure, as sovereign states, depends upon the trial of their strength and power.<sup>20</sup>

Kautilya looks at the circles of states from a conqueror's viewpoint. It is only in a circle of states that kingship evolves on the principle of political expansion by adopting

<sup>16</sup> Shamasastri, p. 324; Meyer, p. 404.

<sup>17</sup> Shamasastri, p. 324; Meyer, p. 404.

<sup>18</sup> Shamasastri, p. 324; Meyer, p. 404.

<sup>19</sup> Shamasastri, p. 324; Meyer, p. 405.

<sup>20</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 324, 325; Meyer, pp. 404, 405.



the six-fold policy and endeavours to pass from the state of deterioration to that of stagnation and from stagnation to that of progress.<sup>21</sup> The aim of the conqueror's circle of states seems to be to engulf all the circles of states. The conqueror is the centripetal as well as the centrifugal force in his own circle of states. Kautilya explains that "the conqueror, his friend, and his friend's friend are the primary kings constituting a circle of states."<sup>22</sup> He is the 'nave' and the other kings are the 'spokes' of that circle.<sup>23</sup> The only antagonist to his own circle is the enemy's circle of states which has to be destroyed even at considerable loss of men and money by the conqueror.<sup>24</sup> The other two circles of states—the Madhyama king's circle of states and the neutral king's circle of states—are not considered hostile,

<sup>21</sup> Shamasastri, p. 330; Meyer, p. 411.

<sup>22</sup> Shamasastri, p. 323; Meyer, p. 403.

<sup>23</sup> Shamasastri, p. 325; Meyer, p. 403.

<sup>24</sup> Shamasastri, p. 371; Meyer, p. 465.



but friendly by the conqueror.<sup>25</sup> But even the conqueror can never spare them, if signs of disloyalty and faithlessness are visible in them.<sup>26</sup> By observing "the conditions of progress, deterioration, stagnation, reduction, and destruction" he should behave accordingly and exploit the situations as they arise in a manner advantageous to his political aims.

That there can never be eternal peace among the sovereign states of unequal political strength and power is a known fact to Kautilya. As a rule it is only the inferior power that seeks peace; the superior power wages war on the inferior one.<sup>27</sup> But in spite of no permanent peace in the world of the superior and the inferior sovereign states, Kautilya prefers the conditions of peace to those of war,

<sup>25</sup> Shamasastri, p. 385; Meyer, p. 485.

<sup>26</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 385, 386, 387, 388, 389; Meyer, pp. 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491.

<sup>27</sup> Shamasastri, p. 327; Meyer, p. 407.



because "when the advantages from peace and war are of equal character, one should prefer peace".<sup>28</sup> He writes when the proposal of peace is made to the conqueror its motives are to be carefully weighed and the course of action to be taken in matters of peace settlement chiefly depends upon the productivity of good results accruing therefrom.<sup>29</sup> So peace to him is always a gain, an accomplishment and an advantage. Kautilya says that "peace, depended upon honesty or oath, is immutable both in this and the next world."<sup>30</sup> He is also conscious of the fact that the rising power breaks the agreement of peace.<sup>31</sup> Therefore the conqueror has to decide in accordance with the emergencies of times and do what lies in his best interests.

<sup>28</sup> Shamasastri, p. 331; Meyer, p. 411.

<sup>29</sup> Shamasastri, p. 325; Meyer, p. 443.

<sup>30</sup> Shamasastri, p. 381; Meyer, p. 478.

<sup>31</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 373, 383; Meyer, pp. 482, 429, 467.



The real work of the conqueror in the first instance is to mobilize all his resources and focus all his thoughts and energies to his own advantage on his own circle of states. The object is to strengthen his own political position and eliminate all chances of mishap and miscarriage<sup>32</sup> as his strength and power determine the political situation. The circle of states has its own laws to work out in order to achieve, on an effectively permanent basis, all that can be desired in the domain of inter-statal politics. "The circle of states," remarks Kauṭilya, "is the source of the six-fold policy."<sup>33</sup>

The teacher of Kauṭilya lays down that "peace (sandhi); war (vigraha) observance of neutrality (âsana); marching (yâna); alliance (samsraya); and making peace with one and waging war with another are the six forms of

<sup>32</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 342, 343, 344; Meyer, pp. 426, 427, 428, 429.

<sup>33</sup> Shamasastri, p. 327; Meyer, p. 406.



state-policy.”<sup>34</sup> Kauṭilya differs from Vâtavyâdhi who holds that there are only two forms of policy—peace and war—and all the six forms are the outcome of these two primary forms of policy.<sup>35</sup> While agreeing with his teacher Kauṭilya confirms that there are only six forms of policy, though they differ in the respective conditions.<sup>36</sup> The six-fold policy is the sharp instrument that the conqueror wields wisely, skilfully, and advantageously. The secret of success of his conquests or political aims is in the correct and adequate use of the six-fold policy.<sup>37</sup> Kauṭilya in his own original way points out that “whoever thus knows the

<sup>34</sup> Shamasastri, p. 327; Meyer, p. 406.

<sup>35</sup> Shamasastri p. 327; Meyer, p. 406.

<sup>36</sup> Shamasastri, p. 327; Meyer, p. 406.

<sup>37</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389; Meyer, pp. 413, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491.



interdependence of the six kinds of policy plays at his pleasure with kings, bound round as it were in chains skilfully by himself.”<sup>38</sup>

As the six-fold policy is pursued by the conqueror for the furtherance and achievement of political ambition as well as goal, so religion, as a political factor in the scheme of the conqueror, is exploited in the interest of the state. Kautilya is well aware of the power of religion over the people and he has no scruples or compunction in dragging religion into the arena of politics in order to make it serve the political power.

He realizes its supreme importance in politics as an instrument of political propaganda. Its influence can be utilized both within as well as without the state. The sole purpose of the propagandic value of religion is to strengthen and cement the base of political forces for the stability and welfare

<sup>38</sup> Shamasastri, p. 389; Meyer, p. 491.



of the state. Kauṭilya expresses his views that the political propaganda has to be done by astrologers, soothsayers, horologists, story-tellers and spies and wide publicity be given throughout the kingdom that the king possesses powers of associating with gods.<sup>39</sup>

Likewise in foreign countries, they should also spread the news of gods appearing before the conqueror and of his having received from heaven weapons and treasure.<sup>40</sup> What Kauṭilya tries to convey is that the conqueror is a messenger of god for bringing about peace and order in the land and routing enemies of the state. In this way the god-conqueror not only infuses enthusiastic spirit among his own men, but also frightens his enemy's people by giving publicity to his power of omniscience and close association with gods.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Shamasastri, p. 476; Meyer, pp. 613, 164.

<sup>40</sup> Shamasastri, p. 476; Meyer, p. 614.

<sup>41</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 475, 476; Meyer, pp. 612, 613.



He also sets 'ascetics' of different groups to conduct religious rites and ceremonies as political snares or secret contrivances with a view to lasso the enemies of the conqueror.<sup>42</sup> As man attains heaven by observance of religious sacrifices, so Kautilya equalizes the importance of sacrifices in the time of war to that of religious sacrifices. The armies of the conqueror are to be infused with religious fervour and zeal for the cause of their country and thus dying on the battle-field they attain heaven. The political war of the conqueror is in reality a religious war for the armies. The religious fervour brings out the superb qualities of the armies and creates in them a deep-rooted faith in the righteousness of the cause as well as in the formidability of their power;<sup>43</sup> these make them hardy, brave, and dare-devilish. Hence

<sup>42</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 478, 479, 480; Meyer, pp. 616, 617, 618, 619.

<sup>43</sup> Shamasastri, p. 442; Meyer, p. 571.



the influence of religion in the domain of politics is preponderous.

"It is declared in the Vedas," remarks Kautilya, "that the goal which is reached by sacrificers after performing the final ablutions in sacrifices . . . is the very goal which brave men are destined to attain."<sup>44</sup> He adds that "beyond those places which Brahmans, desirous of getting into heaven, attain together with their sacrificial instruments by performing a number of sacrifices, or by practising penance are the places which brave men, losing life in good battles, are destined to attain immediately."<sup>45</sup>

The fate of the conqueror is decided on the battle-field. But the successful conduct of war mainly depends upon its equipment and paraphernalia. In other words, a replenished treasury of the state can only provide all the facilities for conducting war in a

<sup>44</sup> Shamasasthy, p. 442; Meyer, pp. 570, 571.

<sup>45</sup> Shamasasthy, p. 442; Meyer, pp. 570, 571.



successful manner. As long as the treasury is full and rich, all goes well. When the conqueror is faced with a financial crisis, the political situation becomes acute and serious. He then has to enact laws for the exigency of times. These emergency laws only hold good or are valid for the duration of an abnormal period in the life of the state. The emergent powers of the conqueror need no expression or justification in normal times. If he does enact such laws, he is destroying his own state. Kautilya specifically points out that such may happen only once and never twice.<sup>46</sup>

• In order to safeguard and protect the vital interests of the state in emergencies and stringencies he advocates the straight policy of demanding money from the country. All classes and professions have to contribute according to their capacity.<sup>47</sup> Even pros-

<sup>46</sup> Shamasastri, p. 303; Meyer, p. 375.

<sup>47</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 302, 303; Meyer, pp. 373, 374, 375.



titutes and foreigners have to subscribe towards the 'national' demand.<sup>48</sup> Contributions either in kind or in money are to come from all those who can afford to subscribe.<sup>49</sup> The subscriptions are raised from the citizens and the country people.<sup>50</sup> Collective donations are publicly announced by the king with a view to encouraging others to follow the example and contributing generously towards the 'fund'.<sup>51</sup> "The wealthy persons may be requested to give as much of their gold as they can. Those who, of their own accord, or with the intention of doing good, offer their wealth to the king shall be honoured with a rank in the court, an umbrella, or a turban or some ornaments in return for their gold."<sup>52</sup> In order to facilitate the collec-

<sup>48</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 302, 303; Meyer, pp. 373, 374, 375.

<sup>49</sup> Shamasastri, p. 303; Meyer, p. 375.

<sup>50</sup> Shamasastri, p. 303; Meyer, p. 375.

<sup>51</sup> Shamasastri, p. 303; Meyer, p. 375.

<sup>52</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 303, 304; Meyer, p. 375.



tion of money the state indirectly arranges 'shows' or 'fêtes' for the public that can be seen by them on payment of admission fee.<sup>53</sup>

The state also saddles its spies on the seditious and the wicked in order to fleece or squeeze out wealth from them by various crooked and ingenious methods.<sup>54</sup> Never against persons other than the seditious and the wicked such measures are to be taken.<sup>55</sup> In the same strain Kautilya lays hands on religious endowments. "The various kinds of property of the gods of fortified cities and country parts," of the societies of heretics and of temples can be confiscated and utilized for the emergent purposes of the state.<sup>56</sup>

In time of national calamities the state has to protect the kingdom,<sup>57</sup> show favour to

<sup>53</sup> Shamasastri, p. 304; Meyer, p. 376.

<sup>54</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 304, 305, 306, 307; Meyer, pp. 377, 378, 379, 380.

<sup>55</sup> Shamasastri, p. 307; Meyer, p. 380.

<sup>56</sup> Shamasastri, p. 304; Meyer, pp. 375, 376.

<sup>57</sup> Shamasastri, p. 261; Meyer, p. 325.



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the people,<sup>58</sup> do such works as are usually resorted to in calamities.<sup>59</sup> Kautilya writes that "he (the king) may show favour by distributing either his own collection of provisions or the hoarded income of the rich among the people, or seek for help from his friends among kings; or the policy of thinning the rich by exacting excessive revenue (karśanam), or causing them to vomit their accumulated wealth (vamanam) may be resorted to."<sup>60</sup>

Kautilya devises ways and means for safeguarding the interests of the state. He takes utmost care in adopting sound principles for the actual working of government, as he is conscious of the weakness of human nature. This frail side of human behaviourism is taken into account in engineering methods for eliminating its evil effect and influence

<sup>58</sup> Shamasastri, p. 262; Meyer, p. 327.

<sup>59</sup> Shamasastri, p. 263; Meyer, p. 327.

<sup>60</sup> Shamasastri, p. 263; Meyer, p. 327.



from all departments of government. His methods are ingenious.

Kautilya introduces a system of tests in statecraft in order to reduce to negligible point or minimize chances of political crime, corruption, embezzlement, and fraud. It is a scheme of checks and counter-checks that the king has to enforce with a view to judging the real character of the government officers as well as to assessing their capacities and worthiness. For achieving the objective in view the king, through the subtle agency of espionage, places the officers of the ministerial as well as other government departments without their knowing, under the religious, monetary, love, and fear allurements.<sup>61</sup> Those who pass the 'secret' tests of allurements are employed in various departments according to their achieved 'credits',<sup>62</sup> as the most honest,

<sup>61</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22; Meyer, pp. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.

<sup>62</sup> Shamasastri, p. 19; Meyer, p. 16.



conscientious, and reliable ministerial officers in whose hands are entrusted the sole charge of the whole efficient working of government.

Kauṭilya also knows the strong as well as weak points in the system of espionage. There lies buried in it 'high explosives'. The whole 'invisible' scheme of espionage has got to be so manoeuvred through the initiative of the king that he may not be detected as a party to it, but he shall "set up an external object as the butt for all the four kinds of allurements."<sup>63</sup> According to Kauṭilya the king is above parties, groups, and people, and "never shall he make himself or his queen an object (laksam, butt) of testing the character of his councillors, nor shall he vitiate the pure like water with poison."<sup>64</sup>

The scheme of espionage is fraught with dangers and risks. But in spite of its pit-

<sup>63</sup> Shamasastri, p. 20; Meyer, p. 17.

<sup>64</sup> Shamasastri, p. 20; Meyer, p. 16.



falls Kauṭilya considers it necessary for the stability, efficiency, and progress of the state. It is an unavoidable anvil and barometer for the state. The government officers, high and low, have to pass through the 'invisible' ordeal or the anvil-test without their knowledge. The king thus applying tests of different intensifications, gets into the know of things—the manning and working of the government departments. In such a way Kauṭilya makes the state function on a firm basis of bureaucratic government. The real strength as well as weakness of the official block of government as a factor in the stabilization of kingship, government, and the state is brought to light.

The aim of the institution of espionage does not end with espionage only the high and low officers of government. This is its chief work, but of no less importance is the work of general espionage on both citizens and the country people. The idea of the



general espionage is not to molest and harass the people in general, but through it the solidarity and stability of the state can be cemented with an amalgam of public affection and contentment. "In his own state," remarks Kautilya, "a wise king shall guard factions among his people, friendly and hostile, powerful and powerless against the intrigues of foreign kings."<sup>65</sup>

The people form the real base of the Kautilyan state. Kautilya's policy engenders harmonious feelings and fosters a sense of togetherness among the people of the state as a united people in the political sense. The welfare of the state depends not so much upon the welfare of the people as upon their political unity and loyalty. The system of espionage is to do the work of political solidarity among the people. To awaken in them a sense of political loyalty and attach-

<sup>65</sup> Shamasastri, p. 27; Meyer, p. 27.



ment to their king is its positive contribution. The way to work up a loyalist spirit in the people is to confer honours and rewards on those that are contented.<sup>66</sup> It is in the interest of the state to bring about the contentment of a greater number of people.<sup>67</sup> Hence the constructive feature of the general espionage has a long range of effectiveness. It has to materialize its objective by doing political propaganda; by recognizing the importance of the peaceful and loyal citizens and the country people as assets in the scheme of political organization.

• The other phase of the general espionage is also constructive, though its method of work is of a negative nature. This method is utilized to do positive and substantial good to the state in its own negative manner. The "disaffected," the "instruments of enemies," the "treacherous opponents of sovereignty,"

<sup>66</sup> Shamasastri, p. 27; Meyer, p. 26.

<sup>67</sup> Shamasastri, p. 27.



the "implacable enemies," the "friends of a foreign king," the "group of provoked persons," the "group of persons alarmed," the "group of ambitious persons," and the "group of haughty persons" come within the orbit of its activity and surveillance.<sup>68</sup> The scope of its work is too wide. It also covers "protection of parties for or against one's own cause in one's own state"<sup>69</sup> as well as "winning over factions for or against an enemy's cause in an enemy's state."<sup>70</sup>

The activities of the espionage system are not confined to the state people, but extend to the inter-statal people as well. The Kautilian state does not fear so much the refractory and the intransigent within its own kingdom as it dreads the provoked, the alarmed, the ambitious, the haughty of other states. This

<sup>68</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 26, 27, 28, 29, 30; Meyer, pp. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

<sup>69</sup> Shamasastri, p. 26; Meyer, p. 24.

<sup>70</sup> Shamasastri, p. 28; Meyer, p. 27.



human material can also be 'domesticated' or 'tamed' for strengthening the Kauṭilyian state and weakening other states. The aim of the system of espionage is the complete clean-up and smashing-up of all parties, cliques, and factions as well as of the power of the disaffected, the disloyal, and the rebellious within the state. This can be achieved by "conciliation, by gifts, by means of persuasion, by threats, by pointing out the defects of their master, or by sowing dissension or by punishment."<sup>71</sup> "The displeasure of the whole country"<sup>72</sup> as a moral pressure can be exercised for bringing round the "undesirables" in the state.

In the scheme of the Kauṭilyian political organization no political point of view except the one sanctioned, recognized, and established by law and order holds good. The people have to see eye to eye with the

<sup>71</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 27, 30, Meyer, pp. 26, 30.

<sup>72</sup> Shamasastri, p. 27; Meyer, p. 26.



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Kautilyan state. The ideal of Kautilya is one king, one state, one people. It is the spirit of totalitarianism that moulds his thoughts and guides his actions.

To get to the bottom of things—the thorough knowledge of actual conditions of the people—is the first condition to rule successfully. The people as a factor in the state cannot be ignored, as they can bring about its ruination, if it neglects, oppresses, and impoverishes them. Though Kautilya probes into the causes of disaffection and disloyalty in the people, he is convinced of the fact that the people as a whole are docile, innocuous, sound, and peace loving. They are not dangerous as a people, but can become dangerous.<sup>73</sup> There are always either socio-economic or political causes that 'spoil' them and make them bitter, disgruntled, and refractory. It is such people

<sup>73</sup> Meyer, p. 424.



that calls the attention of the state for immediate action.

Among the causes that incite the people against the state are their leaders. That is the reason why Kauṭilya considers the leaders more important and more dangerous than the people.<sup>74</sup> Therefore the state has to reckon with the power of the leaders with a view to breaking it and making the leaders ineffective and powerless, because "disaffection or disloyalty (virâga) can be got rid of by putting down the leaders; for in the absence of a leader or leaders the people are easily governed (bhogya) and they will not take part in the intrigues of enemies."<sup>75</sup> To Kauṭilya the leaders are an eye-sore and a stumbling block in the headway of the conqueror. "The troubles due to one's own Circle", observes Kauṭilya, "can be got rid of by arresting or destroying leaders among

<sup>74</sup> Shamasastri, p. 342; Meyer, p. 426.

<sup>75</sup> Shamasastri, p. 342; Meyer, pp. 426, 427.



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the subjective people.”<sup>76</sup>

That the people find in the leaders their refuge<sup>77</sup> is a known fact to Kauṭilya. He also knows the psychological make-up of leaders who come into existence out of the inherent power of the people. What the people cannot endure or tolerate under the influence of their leaders, can only be possible, if the leaders are put down.<sup>78</sup> The power and hold of leaders over the people depend upon their “excessive courage and wisdom”<sup>79</sup> and their “capacity” to support the cause of the people.<sup>80</sup> But Kauṭilya thinks that the ‘real’ leader is a rarity.<sup>81</sup> Therefore the vast majority can easily be managed and there is no need for the general persecution of the so-called ‘leaders,’ as they cannot be considered as a

<sup>76</sup> Shamasastri, p. 401; Meyer, p. 509.

<sup>77</sup> Shamasastri, p. 401; Meyer, p. 508.

<sup>78</sup> Shamasastri, p. 342; Meyer, p. 427.

<sup>79</sup> Shamasastri, p. 401; Meyer, p. 508.

<sup>80</sup> Shamasastri, p. 401; Meyer, p. 508.

<sup>81</sup> Shamasastri, p. 401; Meyer, p. 508.



menace to the state.<sup>82</sup>

The actual danger is the 'real' leader or leaders, because he works or they work through an organization.<sup>83</sup> The political organization of a leader is more powerful than the organization of the people that can easily be broken down, whereas a leader, through his organization, causes trouble by obstruction to, and destruction of, work of the state.<sup>84</sup> Kautilya does not see so much impending danger in the organization of the people as in the organization of a leader. Both organizations are dangerous for the state but the organization of the people is the lesser evil.<sup>85</sup>

The poverty of the people is one of the socio-economic causes that bring about disaffection and disloyalty in them. The

<sup>82</sup> Shamasastri, p. 401; Meyer, p. 508.

<sup>83</sup> Shamasastri, p. 403; Meyer, p. 511.

<sup>84</sup> Shamasastri, p. 403; Meyer, p. 511.

<sup>85</sup> Shamasastri, p. 403; Meyer, p. 511.



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poverty factor is a double-edged sword that cuts both ways. The lack of material prosperity due to the political weakness of the state adversely affects the population of the country. The dwindling of the people due to want of "gold and grain"<sup>86</sup> and "raw products"<sup>87</sup> is a menace by itself and "a calamity fraught with danger to the kingdom."<sup>88</sup> The poverty of the people is considered the gravest problem, as it "can be remedied with difficulty."<sup>89</sup>

The exhaustion of material resources of the state causes indirectly the impoverishment of the people. As the source of all work or enterprises is the people, who work up and develop the material resources of the state and thereby become happy and prosperous as well as strengthen the power of political

<sup>86</sup> Shamasastri, p. 342; Meyer, p. 426.

<sup>87</sup> Shamasastri, p. 392; Meyer, p. 493.

<sup>88</sup> Shamasastri, p. 342; Meyer, p. 426.

<sup>89</sup> Shamasastri, p. 342; Meyer, p. 426.



authority,<sup>90</sup> so the depletion of the material resources produces a ruinous effect on the productivity and creativeness of the people. Such deleterious influences also undermine the development of the country as a whole. In other words, as the country is the source of 'conducive' works of the state,<sup>91</sup> the political ideal of a chakravartin,<sup>92</sup> the haven of the king,<sup>93</sup> so the impoverished people are a direct cause for the impoverishment of the country.<sup>94</sup> In the impoverished people lurks a real danger for the state in the sense that they can be exploited by the enemy. Kautilya remarks that they "suffer themselves to be won over to the other side by intrigue,"<sup>95</sup> and also "are ever apprehensive of oppression and destruction (by over-taxation) and

<sup>90</sup> Shamasastri, p. 374; Meyer, p. 469.

<sup>91</sup> Shamasastri, p. 421; Meyer, p. 523.

<sup>92</sup> Shamasastri, p. 421; Meyer, p. 523.

<sup>93</sup> Shamasastri, p. 374.

<sup>94</sup> Shamasastri, p. 364; Meyer, p. 457.

<sup>95</sup> Shamasastri, p. 340; Meyer, p. 425.



are therefore desirous of getting rid of their impoverishment or waging war or of migrating elsewhere.”<sup>96</sup>

The evil of evils is the poverty of the people. “When the people are impoverished,” remarks Kauṭilya, “they become greedy; when they are greedy they become disaffected; when disaffected they voluntarily go to the side of the enemy or destroy their own master.”<sup>97</sup> In the same way “a greedy people are ever discontented and they yield themselves to the intrigues of an enemy.”<sup>98</sup> But Kauṭilya is of the opinion that “greed is partial and is found among a few chief officers, and it can be got rid of or satisfied by allowing them to plunder an enemy’s wealth.”<sup>99</sup> “A few chief officers” play their game in enticing the people to their ‘cause,’ though “a greedy people” is a

<sup>96</sup> Shamasastri, p. 342; Meyer, p. 426.

<sup>97</sup> Shamasastri, p. 341; Meyer, pp. 425, 426.

<sup>98</sup> Shamasastri, p. 342; Meyer, p. 426.

<sup>99</sup> Shamasastri, p. 342; Meyer, p. 426.



worked-up grievance for the political exploitation of a clique in its own interest.

It seems that the people have no real cause of their own to sponsor. Kautilya is also aware of the fact that there are people "too nervous to endure the calamities."<sup>100</sup> To him such people have no strength of their own and their behaviour is erratic. They are a pliable instrument in the hands of their leaders who have made them "too nervous" by their subtle propaganda. Their nervous sensitivity is the result of political slogans and catchwords. The "inflammable material" in them is their leaders' work. As they are the making of their leaders, they are ever ready to plunge into the dark deep political uncertainties. Their acts are hysterical. The only course to bridle them is to keep them under restraint and put down their leaders.<sup>101</sup>

"The oppressed subjects whose wrath

<sup>100</sup> Shamasastri, p. 342; Meyer, p. 427.

<sup>101</sup> Shamasastri, p. 342; Meyer, p. 427.



can be pacified by punishing the chief men of the state" are not beyond redemption.<sup>102</sup> Their resentment is due to the oppression of those who are in power. It is therefore the signal duty of the state to protect the "oppressed subjects" from the high-handedness of the "chief men" of the state. Kauṭilya investigates further into the causes of disloyalty and disaffection among the people. He makes the state responsible for their political crimes. It should mend its ways with a view to revitalizing itself.

"The king causes," remarks Kauṭilya, "impoverishment, greed and disaffection among his subjects by insulting the good and commending the wicked; by causing unnatural and unrighteous slaughter of life; by neglecting the observance of proper and righteous customs; by doing unrighteous acts and neglecting righteous ones; by doing what ought

<sup>102</sup> Shamasastri, p. 340; Meyer, p. 424.



not to be done and not doing what ought to be done; by not paying what ought to be paid and exacting what ought not to be taken; by not punishing the guilty and severely punishing the less guilty; by arresting who are not to be caught hold of and leaving those who are to be arrested; by undertaking risky works and destroying profitable ones; by not protecting the people against thieves and by robbing them of their wealth; by giving up manly enterprise and condemning good works; by hurting the leaders of the people and despising the worthy; by provoking the aged; by crooked conduct, and by untruthfulness; by not applying remedies against evils and neglecting works in hand; by carelessness and negligence of himself in maintaining the security of person and property of his subjects. Hence no king should give room to such causes as would bring about impoverishment, greed or disaffection among his people. If, however, they appear, he should at once



take remedial measures against them.”<sup>103</sup>

Kautilya always lays great emphasis on the fact that internal troubles are more serious than external troubles, because they are like the danger arising from a lurking snake.<sup>104</sup> To bring about peaceful conditions within the state, it is imperative “to separate citizens and country people from traitors.”<sup>105</sup> The method to achieve the objective is to “employ all the strategic means, except coercion. It is very difficult to inflict punishment on an assembly of influential men; and if inflicted at all, it may not produce the desired effect, but may give rise to undesirable consequences.”<sup>106</sup> The best way is to “take steps against the leaders of seditions.”<sup>107</sup> “The troubles of the people,” says Visâlaksha, “are more serious: finance, army, raw products,

<sup>103</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 341, 342; Meyer, pp. 425, 426.

<sup>104</sup> Shamasastri, p. 395; Meyer, pp. 497, 534.

<sup>105</sup> Shamasastri, p. 427; Meyer, p. 546.

<sup>106</sup> Shamasastri, p. 427; Meyer, pp. 546, 547.

<sup>107</sup> Shamasastri, p. 427; Meyer, p. 547.



free labour, carriage of things, and collection (of necessities) are all secured from the people.”<sup>108</sup>

Kauṭilya thus brings out the supreme importance of the part played by the people in the welfare of the state. They form its backbone. Without their co-operation the state can neither function nor progress. “For their progress or downfall,” remarks Kauṭilya, “the people depend upon the king.”<sup>109</sup> Having established a natural link between kingship and the people, Kauṭilya lays down the cardinal principle of political realism that “the king is, as it were, the aggregate of the people.”<sup>110</sup> Acts against the well-being of kingship or the state are acts against the welfare of the people. “When the king is well-off by his welfare and prosperity, he pleases the people.”<sup>111</sup> For progress or downfall of the

<sup>108</sup> Shamasastri, p. 392; Meyer, p. 493.

<sup>109</sup> Shamasastri, p. 392; Meyer, p. 493.

<sup>110</sup> Shamasastri, p. 392; Meyer, p. 493.

<sup>111</sup> Shamasastri, p. 392; Meyer, p. 493.



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people kingship is responsible according to the Kauṭilyian viewpoint because kingship is the pivot of all activities, the fountain-head of all inspiration, and the mainstay of all organized human efforts. Kingship as an actuality can make people a potentiality. As a farce it unmakes them into a dissipated force. In a clear-cut manner Kauṭilya expresses himself thus: "Of what kind the king's character is, of the same kind will be the character of the people."<sup>112</sup>

It is also the duty of the state to make people realize the importance of the institution of political control and guidance in regard to their own well-being and welfare. Kauṭilya does not believe in wielding the naked sword for the purpose of 'educating' the people in the laws of politics. The rule of the brute has no inherent power to politicize the people with a view to smoothening the function of

<sup>112</sup> Shamasastri, p. 392; Meyer, p. 493.



the state on efficient principles of statecraft. All this can better be achieved through the powerful, ever-vigilant, and effective agency of espionage. It has always to keep in view the aim of the state—the welfare, happiness, and affection of the people—and to work for the maximum of good with the minimum of brute force.

The actual work of statecraft can only be set into motion after having gained a firm hold on the affection of both local and foreign parties, both in one's own and enemy's state.<sup>113</sup> The practice of government eventually fulfils the aim of the state. It is an art as well as a technique. Though kingship is the soul of the state, yet the success of statecraft is due to the co-operative efforts of ministers. Hence the state cannot function without the assistance of a ministerial body.<sup>114</sup>

The work of statecraft not only involves

<sup>113</sup> Shamasastry, p. 30; Meyer, p. 30.

<sup>114</sup> Shamasastry, p. 14; Meyer, p. 9.



responsibility of great magnitude, but also intricacies and complications. No one individual can have complete control and mastery over the whole machine of statecraft.

It is not its mechanical aspect that calls for attention, care, supervision, and guidance, but the principle of responsible government that has to be put into effect and has to substantiate its responsible acts in the right discharge of duties and obligations. Statecraft cannot be dallied with according to Kauṭilya. It is a serious affair and has to be executed in a serious manner. It can never be a one man's show. Even the burden of political responsibility cannot be shouldered by the king himself though he represents in him the crown, the symbol of sovereignty, the undivided and indivisible power.

Hard facts of life and of the world have to be faced in order to govern for the good of all. The government cannot have the sole monopoly of royalty, though its main-



spring of inspiration and action is the king with unbounded and limitless powers. Kautilya undoubtedly preaches the philosophy of absolute kingship—above all and under none. The supreme political authority reaches its climax in kingship. It is the unifying, adhesive, and corrective force in the Kautilian scheme. It is symbolic of political unity, political strength, political principle, but it lacks 'realism' in its entirety in regard to the working of statecraft.

The actual practice of government demands the realist point of view and a matter-of-fact ways and methods. The chimerical factor has no place in statecraft nor can its laws be erratic. Human freaks are its anti-climax. The administration of government has a rocky foundation. Sound, definite, and concrete principles have to be laid down so that the actual working of statecraft becomes firmly rooted. Powers of the absolute kingship are no doubt curtailed and curbed by



making it a joint-responsibility, a working-in-collaboration, and a discharge of duties-in-unison. Kingship-in-consultative-deliberation can only achieve its high and noble ideal.

"Sovereignty (râjatva)," Kauṭilya aptly observes, "is possible only with assistance."<sup>115</sup> "A single wheel can never move"<sup>116</sup> signifies to him the importance of an active support from ministerial quarter. Only that support can make it move. Kauṭilya deeply thinks over the ministerial question and compares his mental notes with those of the ancient political teachers. One of his political teachers remarks that "in the absence of ministers, works are ill-done; and like a bird deprived of its feathers, king loses his active capacity."<sup>117</sup>

There always lurks a danger for the existence and well-being of kingship without

<sup>115</sup> Shamasastri, p. 14; Meyer, p. 9.

<sup>116</sup> Shamasastri, p. 14; Meyer, p. 9.

<sup>117</sup> Shamasastri, p. 392; Meyer, p. 493.



the employment of ministers. Their importance and value for the safety, security, and progress of the state and the people is much more because "all activities" proceed from ministerial power, "activities such as the successful accomplishment of all works of the people, security of person and property from internal and external enemies, remedial measures against calamities, colonization, improvement of wild tracts of lands, recruiting the army, collection of revenue, and bestowal of favour."<sup>118</sup> Kautilya, emphasizing the all-comprehensive prerogatives of kingship in the whole political organization and statecraft, has to come down to iron facts of reality—the welfare of the people depending upon the king—which ultimately has to be realized through the "active capacity" of his ministers.<sup>119</sup>

The idea of Kautilya is that the supreme

<sup>118</sup> Shamasastri, p. 392; Meyer, p. 494.

<sup>119</sup> Shamasastri, p. 392; Meyer, p. 494.



position and status of kingship is not in any case to be lowered or deteriorated. In all cases of emergency and urgency the king holds the key in his hands. He can over-rule and out-veto all decisions of the ministers and the rules and laws of government, but in the practice of government the king has to loosen his hold on men and institutions. What Kautilya aims at is that the king ought to forgo 'rights' in order to hold fast to his inherent rights and privileges in a better way and to make the affairs of statecraft run on efficient principles through the transferred 'rights' and delegation of 'duties' to ministerial power.

Kautilya's ingenuity lies in this that he considers, for all theoretical purposes, the king as the life-blood of the people, the spirit of government, the active principle of statecraft, the source of all political activities, the supreme law of the state, and the final authority of dictatorship, yet the position of the king suffers from instability—unstable



equilibrium—without the co-operation of his ministers. The employment of ministers will rectify and normalize the situation. Thus the indispensability of ministers in the successful working of government has been established by Kauṭilya.

The next important item is the selection of ministers on certain principles. The question of their requisite qualification has also engaged the attention of Kauṭilya. The ancient political writers, under whom Kauṭilya had his schooling, had also discussed the question of qualification principle of ministers, as they are to be entrusted with the most responsible posts in the government of the country with a view to carrying on the work of government on progressive lines. The selection of ministers is no joke or a petty affair. The welfare of the country depends upon their wise policy. The execution of government orders for the good of the country is their chief concern.



Kauṭilya eventually learns a great deal from his political teachers, but the Kauṭilyian genius is so greatly and uncommonly original that he differs, as a past-master, from them on the qualification principle regarding the selection of ministers. The best man in the right place is the expression of his political thinking and he wishes to materialize it through the powerful agency of kingship.

How the selection of ministers is to be effected is a moot question. "The king," says Bhâradvâja, "shall employ his classmates as his ministers,"<sup>120</sup> because the king having "personal knowledge of their honesty and capacity,"<sup>121</sup> can trust them. Kauṭilya cannot approve of such a principle in the selection of ministers, nor does it appeal to his robust political sense. To him it smacks of favouritism and its logicity is weak.

Visâlaksha—the profound thinker—re-

<sup>120</sup> Shamasastri, p. 14; Meyer, p. 10.

<sup>121</sup> Shamasastri, p. 14; Meyer, p. 10.



marks that the king "shall employ as ministers those whose secrets, possessed of in common, are well-known to him. Possessed of habits and defects in common with the king, they would never hurt him lest he should betray their secrets."<sup>122</sup> This choice in the selection of ministers on the basis of give-and-take sort of consideration and feeling promises no warrant for permanent stability of purpose and of temperament and guarantees no checks, on either party, of a permanent nature for the smooth working of a government.

In the same way the fear-complex factor common to both parties—the king and ministers—would not work "for under the fear of betrayal of his own secrets, the king may also follow them (ministers) in their good and bad acts."<sup>123</sup> The binding factor, according to Parâśara, is the sense of loyalty and devotion of "those who have proved faithful

<sup>122</sup> Shamasastri, p. 14; Meyer, p. 10.

<sup>123</sup> Shamasastri, p. 15; Meyer, p. 10.



to him under difficulties fatal to life and are of tried devotion.”<sup>124</sup> For Kautilya such ‘sentimental’ qualification for the ministerial selection is not convincingly forceful, as the actual working of government requires “both intelligence (buddhiguṇah) and tried ability.”<sup>125</sup>

There is a clash of ideas in Kautilya as to the deciding factor in the selective qualification of ministers. He quotes the authority of his teacher—Kaunapadanta—not to prove that loyalty versus fitness is the factor, but to clear his point in favour of fitness qualification as a principle. “No,” says Kaunapadanta, “for such persons are devoid of other ministerial qualifications; he (the king) shall, therefore, employ as ministers those whose fathers and grandfathers had been ministers before; such persons in virtue of their knowledge of past events and

<sup>124</sup> Shamasastri, p. 15; Meyer, p. 10.

<sup>125</sup> Shamasastri, p. 15; Meyer, p. 10.



of an established relationship with the king will, though offended, never desert him."<sup>126</sup> In endorsing a principle of hereditary conferment of posts the cons outweighed the pros in the Kauṭilyian scheme, because "such persons, having acquired complete dominion over the king, begin to play themselves as the king."<sup>127</sup>

Kauṭilya rejects outright the principle of hereditary posts to be handed over from father to son. So, in the words of another of his teachers—Vâtavyâdhi—"such new persons as are proficient in the science of polity" shall be employed by the king.<sup>128</sup> Vâtavyâdhi's viewpoint is that "it is such new persons who will regard the king as the real sceptre-bearer (daṇḍadharâ) and dare not offend him."<sup>129</sup> His logic does not even

<sup>126</sup> Shamasastri, p. 15; Meyer, pp. 10, 11.

<sup>127</sup> Shamasastri, p. 15; Meyer, p. 11.

<sup>128</sup> Shamasastri, p. 15; Meyer, p. 11.

<sup>129</sup> Shamasastri, p. 15; Meyer, p. 11.



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convince Kauṭilya. He is of the opinion that ministers who have their training in the theory of political science and no practical experience of statecraft would be poor specimens as administrators and would fail to discharge the ministerial responsibility. The government to him is a complicated machine and it really requires great experts in theory as well as in practice of government.

Kauṭilya, while differing from his old teachers, is immensely impressed by the opinion of Bâhudantîputra who says that "a man possessed of only theoretical knowledge and having no experience of practical politics is likely to commit serious blunders when engaged in actual works".<sup>130</sup> To him ministers should have some other additional qualifications, such as, "born of high family and possessed of wisdom, purity of purpose, bravery, and loyal feelings."<sup>131</sup> Kauṭilya

<sup>130</sup> Shamasastri, p. 15; Meyer, p. 11.

<sup>131</sup> Shamasastri, p. 15; Meyer, p. 11.



agrees *in toto* with Bâhudantîputra and says that "this is satisfactory in all respects; for a man's ability is inferred from his capacity shown in work."<sup>132</sup>

After deciding the principle of selection of ministers Kauṭilya switches off to the theme—the actual work in a council (mantripari-shad). He remarks that "all kinds of administrative measures are preceded by deliberation in a well-formed council."<sup>133</sup> It is only "in a well-formed" council of ministers that deliberation on the problems of statecraft can be possible. To make deliberation in council effective and practical it is necessary that the state must have the means of carrying out works, the command over material as well as human resources, the allotment of time and place, the remedies against failures, and the objective of completing work, *i.e.*, ultimate success.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>132</sup> Shamasastri, p. 16; Meyer, p. 11.

<sup>133</sup> Shamasastri, p. 30; Meyer, p. 30.

<sup>134</sup> Shamasastri, p. 32; Meyer, p. 33.



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These "five constituents" reveal the underlying spirit of the council deliberation and give the deliberative aspect of council a realistic turn. As it is of a serious nature, so Kauṭilya is very particular that "the subject-matter of a council shall be entirely secret and deliberation in it shall be so carried out that even birds cannot see them."<sup>135</sup> Sufficient safeguarding against disclosure of secrets should be provided for since it is a crime of great magnitude against the state to disclose counsels.<sup>136</sup> That no unauthorized person should come near the place of deliberation seems to be the law of the Kauṭilyian state.<sup>137</sup> "The disclosure of counsels may be detected by observing changes in the attitude and countenance of envoys, ministers, and masters (rulers)."<sup>138</sup> Kauṭilya knows a number of

<sup>135</sup> Shamasastri, p. 30; Meyer, p. 31.

<sup>136</sup> Shamasastri, p. 30; Meyer, p. 31.

<sup>137</sup> Shamasastri, p. 30; Meyer, p. 31.

<sup>138</sup> Shamasastri, p. 30; Meyer, p. 31.



causes for the betrayal of counsels.<sup>139</sup> Hence severe steps may always be taken for maintaining secrecy of a council matter as well as keeping strict watch over officers who participate in the deliberations.<sup>140</sup>

The danger of leakage and disclosure of the state secrets or schemes also was known to nearly all the political writers of ancient India. In order to safeguard the vital interests of the state by means of secrecy, observes Bhâradvâja, the king shall singly deliberate over secret matter; for the councillors have their own advisers and these their own. This kind of chain of advisers-cum-advisers tends to the disclosure of counsels.<sup>141</sup> With Bhâradvâja the danger of disclosure of counsels does not rest upon the ministers so much as upon their retinue. There-

<sup>139</sup> Shamasastri, p. 31; Meyer, p. 31.

<sup>140</sup> Shamasastri, p. 31; Meyer, p. 31.

<sup>141</sup> Shamasastri, p. 31; Meyer, p. 31.



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fore "no outside person"<sup>142</sup> shall know anything of the work which the king has in view, except those employed for its execution.<sup>143</sup> It shows that the position of the ministers in the capacity of councillors or advisers amounts to nothing. Their existence will be nowhere.

The School of Bhâradvâja is condemned by Viśâlâksha who says that "no deliberation made by a single person will be successful; the nature of the work which a sovereign has to do is to be inferred from the consideration of both the invisible and visible causes."<sup>144</sup> Such a viewpoint raises the importance of the intricate and wide aspect of the work the king has in view and enhances the value of the ministerial advice. "Hence he shall", observes Viśâlâksha, "sit at deliberation with persons of wide intellect (ministers)."<sup>145</sup>

<sup>142</sup> Shamasastri, p. 31; Meyer, p. 31.

<sup>143</sup> Shamasastri, p. 31; Meyer, p. 31.

<sup>144</sup> Shamasastri, p. 31; Meyer, p. 32.

<sup>145</sup> Shamasastri, p. 31; Meyer, p. 31.



Viśâlāksha is a great respecter of sound judgment whatever quarter it may come from. In order to bring home this fact to the king he expresses himself thus: "He shall despise none, but hear the opinion of all. A wise man shall make use of even a child's sensible utterance."<sup>146</sup> While refuting the standpoint of Viśâlāksha, Parâśara shows more ingenuity and clear thinking by observing that "this is ascertaining the opinions of others, but not keeping counsels."<sup>147</sup>

Actually keeping counsel is more important than ascertaining opinions of others. But the suspicious mind of Parâśara compels him not to place full confidence on the ministers who are to be invited for keeping counsels. He believes in keeping counsels, but in his own way. Parâśara advises the king not to place his trump cards before the ministers, but what is advisable to do in the matter

<sup>146</sup> Shamasastri, p. 31; Meyer, p. 32.

<sup>147</sup> Shamasastri, p. 31; Meyer, p. 32.



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is to ask opinion of the ministers on a work or project similar to the one he has in view and to do as they decide.<sup>148</sup> The idea at the back of Parâsara's mind is that in this way both purposes are served, *viz.*, the ascertainment of opinions and maintenance of secrecy.<sup>149</sup>

The basis of the whole thought-process of Parâsara is weak and its logicality defective. "Not so," says Písuna, "for ministers, when called for their opinions regarding a distant undertaking, or an accomplished or unaccomplished work, either approach the subject with indifference or give their opinions half-heartedly. This is a serious defect."<sup>150</sup> What Písuna means to say is that the expert knowledge has to be sought for advice and the competent ministers have to be taken into full confidence. Thus the king can secure

<sup>148</sup> Shamasastri, p. 31; Meyer, p. 32.

<sup>149</sup> Shamasastri, p. 31; Meyer, p. 32.

<sup>150</sup> Shamasastri, p. 32; Meyer, p. 32.



good advice as well as secrecy of counsel.<sup>151</sup>

All these political writers of ancient India betray a sort of obsession of a political nature. There is something sneaky about them in the elaboration of their doctrines. The hide-and-seek policy is too evident in them. To state facts in a straight manner seems to be beyond them. How far the political realism of their times was responsible for colouring their political outlook is difficult to guess.

Kautilya, most unlike his predecessors, does not mince matters or do hair-splitting. He is too positive in his own way and openly challenges the statements of his teachers without any shyness or modesty. He throws overboard the technique and comes out in his own colours. "Not so," Kautilya asserts, "for (this kind of seeking for advice) is infinite and endless<sup>152</sup> and serves no useful purpose. His belief is that "consultation with

<sup>151</sup> Shamasastri, p. 32; Meyer, p. 32.

<sup>152</sup> Shamasastri, p. 32; Meyer, p. 32.



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a certain number of ministers is essential, but consultation with a single minister may not lead to any definite conclusion in cases of complicated issues. A single minister proceeds wilfully and without restraint. In deliberating with two ministers, the king may be overpowered by their combined action, or imperilled by their mutual dissension. But with three or four ministers he will not come to any serious grief, but will arrive at satisfactory results. With ministers more than four in number, he will have to come to a decision after a good deal of trouble, nor will secrecy of counsel be maintained without much trouble."<sup>153</sup>

Kauṭilya also knows that as political conditions or issues determine the requirements of place, time, and nature of the work in view, it is advisable for the king, if he thinks it proper, to reduce the number

<sup>153</sup> Shamasastri, p. 32; Meyer, p. 33.



of ministers either to one or two, and take the initiative himself in the matter.<sup>154</sup> It is also left to the discretion and commonsense of the king to consult them either individually or collectively and judge the merit of their opinions.<sup>155</sup>

According to the different schools of political thought in ancient India the assembly of ministers (mantriparishad) consisted of twelve members (Manu), sixteen members (Bṛihaspati), and twenty members (Uśanas). But Kauṭilya does not want to lay down any hard and fast rules regarding the number of members of the council (mantriparishad). The number of ministers depends upon the need and the political aim of the state.<sup>156</sup>

Kauṭilya possesses a keen sense to differentiate between normal and abnormal times.

<sup>154</sup> Shāmasastry, p. 32; Meyer, p. 33.

<sup>155</sup> Shāmasastry, p. 32; Meyer, p. 33.

<sup>156</sup> Shāmasastry, p. 33; Meyer, p. 33.



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The abnormal time requires extraordinary measures for the safety of the state or kingship. The mantriparishad then assumes a most important role. To face the emergent situation squarely the king should come out with the whole truth and need not hide it from his ministers. He should call them in the council (mantriparishad) for that purpose and whatever the decision arrived at, or the course of action taken towards the achievement of success, by the majority of all the members of the council the king should abide by it.<sup>157</sup>

The duties of the ministers carry with them heavy responsibilities. The entire guidance of the affairs of statecraft falls upon their shoulders.<sup>158</sup> The Arthaśâstra of Kautilya does not throw light on the constitutional aspect of the mantriparishad. Whether it functions as a collective responsibility or as

<sup>157</sup> Shamasastri, p. 33; Meyer, p. 34.

<sup>158</sup> Shamasastri, p. 33; Meyer, p. 33, 34.



individual responsibility of one minister to another is very difficult to decide. They one and all owe allegiance to the crown and are held responsible for the crown.

With kingship they rise or fall. But on one point Kauṭilya is definite. That is the status of the prime-minister. He is after the king the greatest person in the state. It is he who represents the crown and is therefore an indispensable factor in statecraft. The welfare of the people and the security of the country also depend upon him. He is considered the mainstay of the security of the king's life.<sup>159</sup> He can even invest himself with powers of sovereignty when a calamity befalls a king.<sup>160</sup> This is a political make-shift with a view to warding off the imminent danger to the state and saving the country from anarchy.<sup>161</sup> But the usurpa-

<sup>159</sup> Shamasastri, p. 392; Meyer, p. 493.

<sup>160</sup> Shamasastri, p. 316; Meyer, p. 394.

<sup>161</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 315, 316, 317, 318; Meyer, R.P. 392, 393, 394, 395, 396.



tion of kingship by the prime-minister can never be a justifiable act in the eyes of Kauṭilya.

For Bhâradvâja, the teacher of Kauṭilya, there is nothing wrong in usurpation. "The king lying on his death-bed," observes Bhâradvâja, "the minister may set up the princes and other chiefs of the royal family against other chiefs. Whoever attacks the kingdom may be put to death under the plea of disturbance and annoyance to the people; or having secretly punished the chief rebels of the royal family and brought them under control, the minister shall himself take possession of the kingdom, for on account of the kingdom the father hates his sons, sons their father; why should the minister who is the prop of the kingdom (be an exception to it)? Therefore he shall never discard what has, of its own accord, fallen into his hands."<sup>162</sup> But the very idea of usurpation

<sup>162</sup> Shamasastri, p. 316; Meyer, p. 394.



of kingship is nauseating to Kauṭilya, who believes in the rightfulness of the lawful succession to throne after the death of the king.

Though the succession question is a knotty one because "the princes like crabs have a notorious tendency of eating up their begetter"<sup>163</sup>, yet he insists on it. His conviction is that this psychological weakness in the princes can be rectified by correct education, self-culture, and discipline. The crown prince "shall be gradually persuaded of the evil consequences of such attempts by telling: a king is not made by a mere wish; failure of thy attempt will bring about thy death; success makes thee fall into hell and causes the people to lament (for thy father) and destroy the only clod (ekaloshtavadhaścha) *i.e.*, thyself."<sup>164</sup>

Kauṭilya is of the opinion that there is no

<sup>163</sup> Shamasastri, p. 37; Meyer, p. 39.

<sup>164</sup> Shamasastri, p. 39; Meyer, p. 41.



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greater crime or sin than making wicked impressions on the innocent mind of the prince.<sup>165</sup> As a rule the law of succession is the right of primogeniture, but an exception to it can also be made. "Except in dangers," remarks Kautilya, "sovereignty falling to the lot of the eldest (son) is always respected."<sup>166</sup> But the heir-apparent of a "perverted mind", entangling himself in dangers and hating righteousness and wealth, should not be installed on the royal throne, because he is wicked.<sup>167</sup>

The throne then should go to some other member of the royal family who befits kingship.<sup>168</sup> If there is no heir except the "wicked prince" in the line of royalty, then he may only be looked upon as a "flag" and the real work of kingship has to be done by ministers.<sup>169</sup> Even the whole responsibility of

<sup>165</sup> Shamasastri, p. 38; Meyer, p. 41.

<sup>166</sup> Shamasastri, p. 38; Meyer, p. 41.

<sup>167</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 39, 40; Meyer, pp. 42, 43.

<sup>168</sup> Shamasastri, pp. 39, 40; Meyer, p. 43.

<sup>169</sup> Shamasastri, p. 317; Meyer, p. 395.



the state has to be borne by them.<sup>170</sup> The royal powers are then in the hands of the prime-minister and his ministerial colleagues. But never would Kauṭilya like to confer royalty upon the prime-minister. The whole act of conferment is unrighteous and excites popular fury; nor is it an accepted rule.<sup>171</sup>

The prime-minister with his colleagues takes upon himself the responsibility to work for the welfare of the state as trustees. For the existence of the state Kauṭilya is compelled to strike a compromise in the unavoidable retention of a "wicked" king (whom he detests from the core of his heart) and the complete ministerial authorization, *i.e.*, empowering ministers with royal authority, prestige, and status. This is done for the welfare of the people as well as for the well-being of the state.

<sup>170</sup> Shamasastri, p. 317; Meyer, p. 395.

<sup>171</sup> Shamasastri, p. 317; Meyer, p. 395.







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PRINTED BY J. K. SHARMA AT THE ALLAHABAD LAW  
JOURNAL PRESS, ALLAHABAD AND PUBLISHED BY  
KITABISTAN, ALLAHABAD







